



ANNUAL



DC COMICS PRESENTS

SUPERMAN

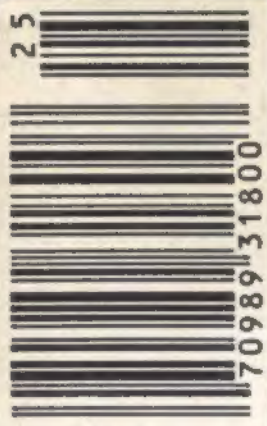
AND THE GOLDEN AGE

SUPERMAN



Illustration by [illegible]

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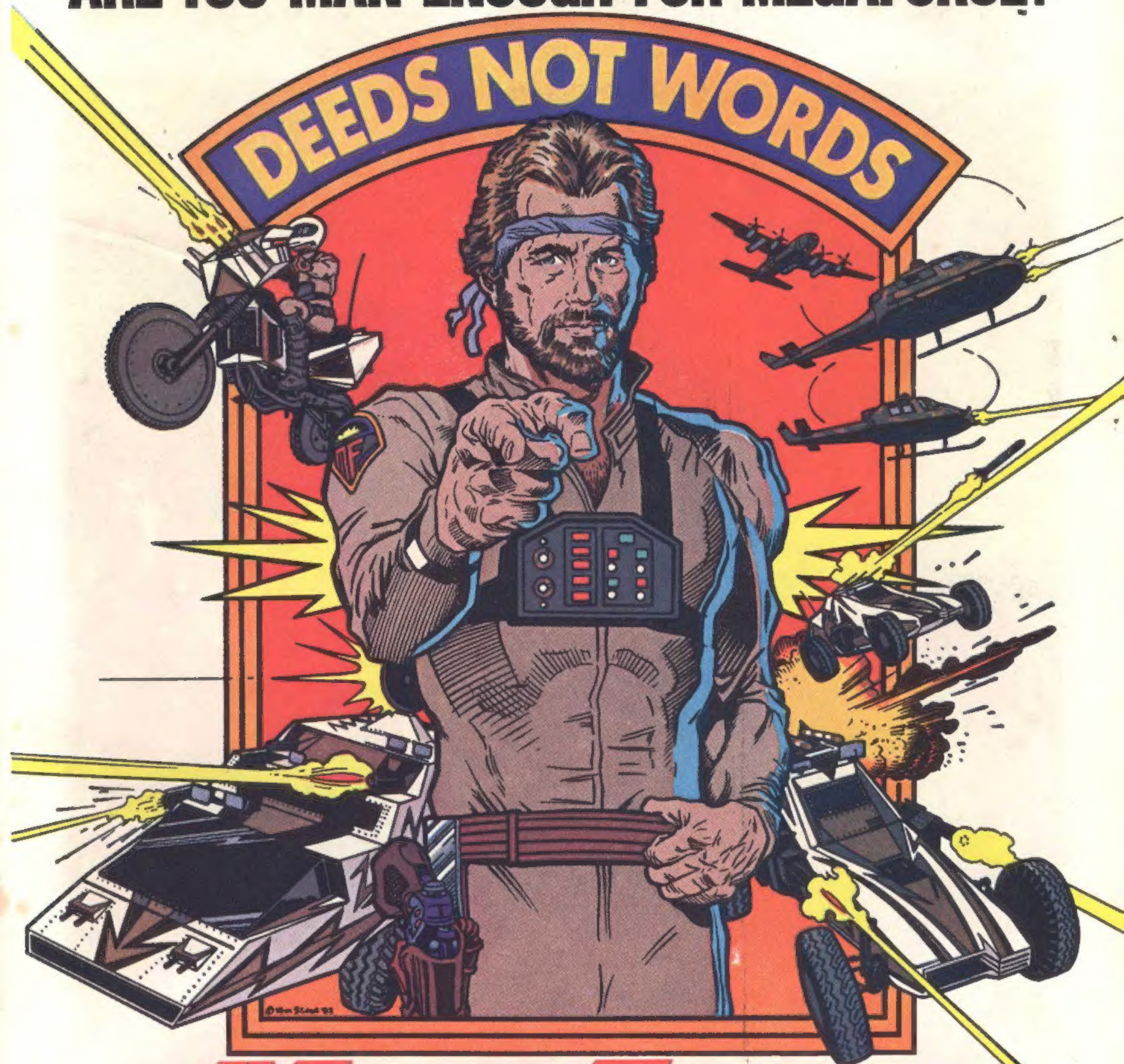


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SUPERMAN

A MEETING OF GIANTS

SIDE-BY-SIDE WITH

CREATED BY
JERRY SIEGEL &
JOE SHUSTER

THE GOLDEN AGE

SUPERMAN



MARV WOLFMAN
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RICH BUCKLER
&
DAVE HUNT
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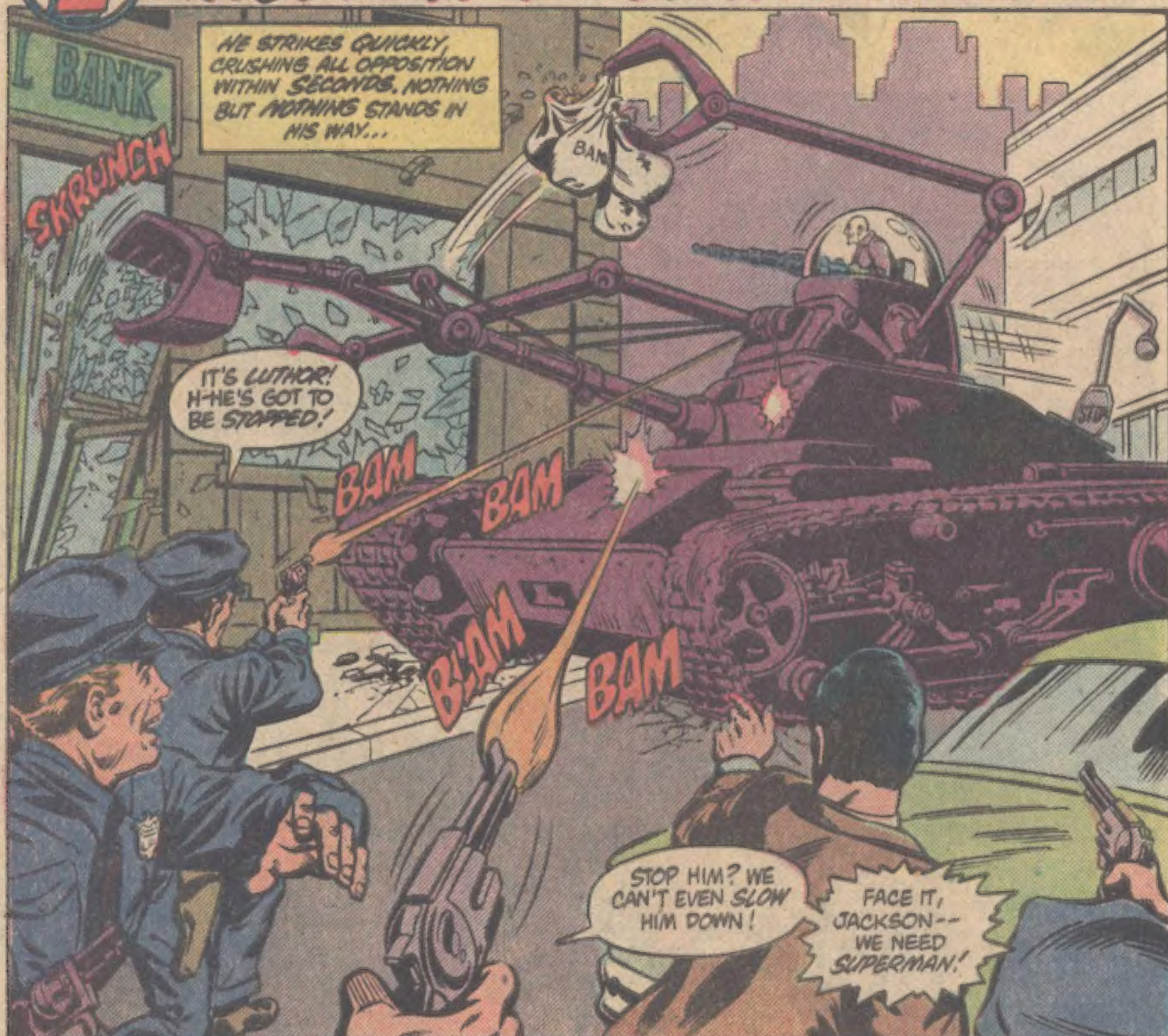
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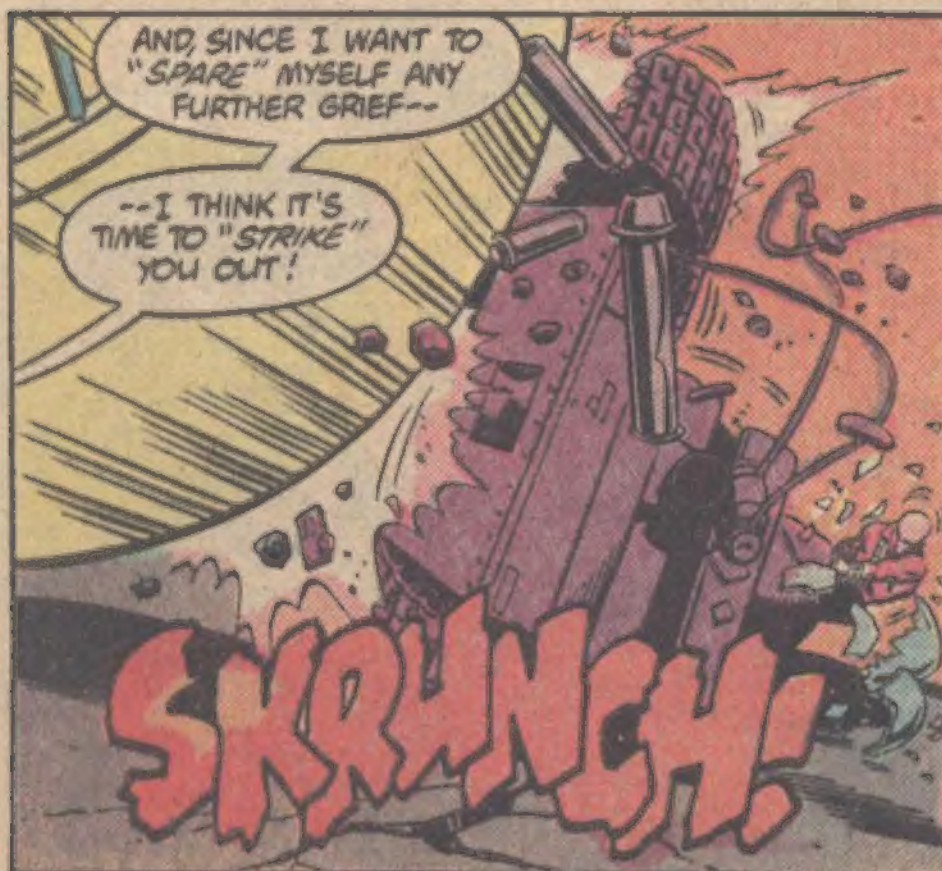
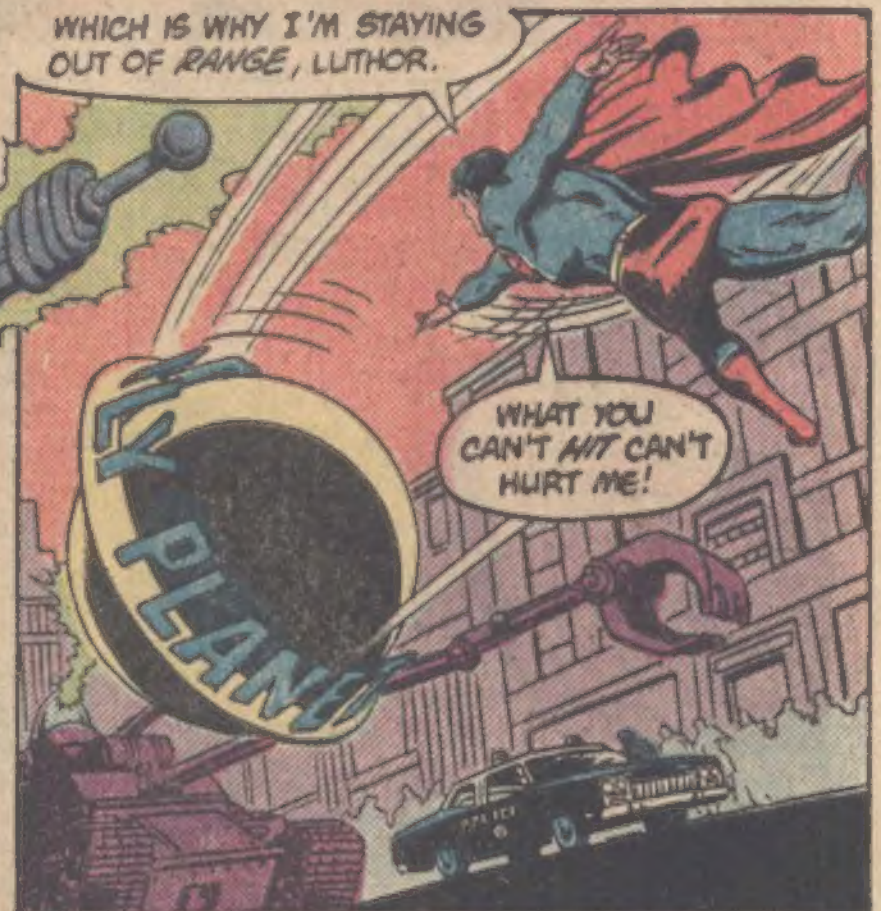
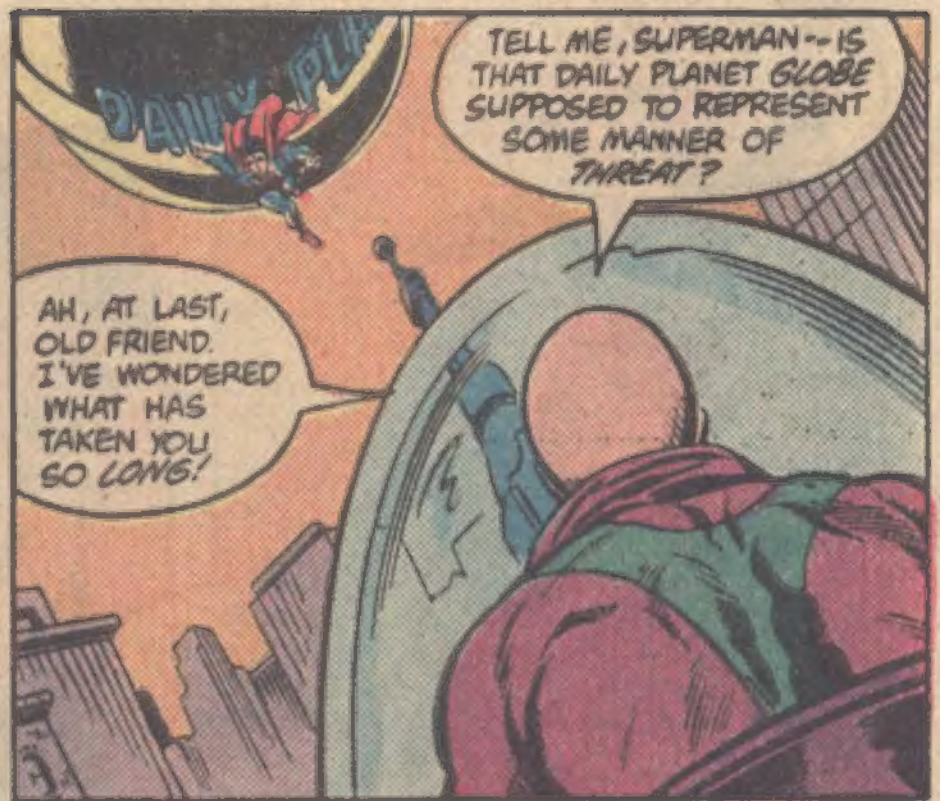
A Warner Communications Company

CHAPTER
1

MILLION-DOLLAR MAYHEM!



RELUCTANTLY, HE LOWERS HER TO THE ROOF OF THE GALAXY BROADCASTING BUILDING, AND...





EARTH-TWO: AND IN THE LAB
OF THIS EARTH'S LUTHOR...

ALL TOO OFTEN HAVE I BEEN
DEFEATED BY THAT SUPER-
POWERED CRETIN...

... AND ALL TOO OFTEN
HAVE I REFRAINED FROM
STRIKING BACK WITH ALL
THE AWESOME ARSENAL
AT MY DISPOSAL.

BUT NO
MORE,
SUPERMAN!

THIS TIME ALEXE!
LUTHOR SHALL
BE THE VICTOR!

YOU SEE,
SUPERMAN, THIS
TIME MY PLAN
EXCLUDES YOU,
YET WILL HIT YOU
WHERE IT HURTS
THE MOST!

ALL YOUR
STUPID FRIENDS
WORK AT THE
DAILY STAR--

--BUT VERY SOON,
MY SUPER MISSILES
WILL MAKE THEM
LITTLE MORE THAN
MERE MEMORIES--

DAILY
STAR

--WHICH
SHALL TORTURE
YOUR SOUL FOR
AS LONG AS
YOU LIVE!

YOU MAY NOT DIE,
SUPERMAN-- BUT THE
DEATH OF YOUR FRIENDS
WILL DEMORALIZE AND
ULTIMATELY DESTROY
YOU!

CHAPTER
2

MISSILES OVER METROPOLIS

CONTINUED ON 2ND PAGE FOLLOWING.

The
Adventures
Of

SGT. SHARK!



I'M SGT. SHARK, AND THIS IS MY PARROT, GAFFI WE ROAM THE WORLD LOOKING FOR ADVENTURE. 6 MONTHS AGO I FOUND ALMOST MORE THAN I COULD HANDLE!

I WAS OFF TIGER ISLAND, PULLING PATROL, WHEN . . .



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SGT. SHARK'S
GENUINE SHARK'S
TOOTH PENDANT
WORK FOR YOU! DON'T
WEAR A SUBSTITUTE -
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ADDRESS _____

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STATE _____ ZIP _____

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RUSH TO:

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____

STATE _____ ZIP _____



AND, IN THE OFFICE OF DAILY STAR EDITOR CLARK KENT...

CLARK--I--I CAN'T BELIEVE IT!

THAT YOU WANT TO RUSH INTO MY ARMS AND KISS ME?

NO, YOU BIG LUG--LOOK! UP IN THE SKY--



GREAT SCOTT!

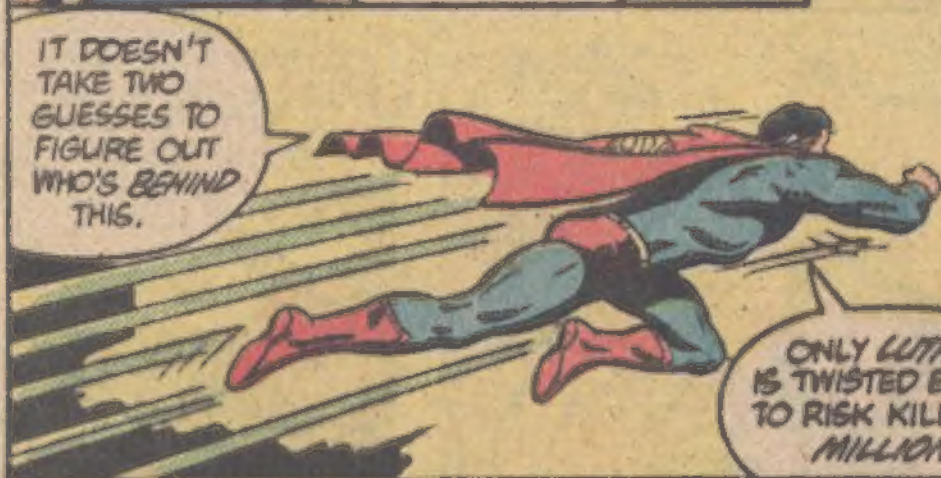
THIS CERTAINLY IS A JOB FOR SUPERMAN!

AND, AS THE MAN OF TOMORROW LEAPS SKYWARD...

UP, UP, AND AWAY!

BE CAREFUL, DARLING.

I ALWAYS AM, HONEY.



IT DOESN'T TAKE TWO GUESSES TO FIGURE OUT WHO'S BEHIND THIS.

ONLY LUTHOR IS TWISTED ENOUGH TO RISK KILLING MILLIONS.

WELL, I'LL HAVE TO PUT A CRIMP IN HIS SINISTERLY TAILORED PLANS!



BUT...

BEAUTIFUL! THE STEEL-SKINNED GOON SHOWED UP, BUT MY SUPER-SPEED MISSILES ARE STILL STRONGER THAN HE!



COOF! THAT SENT ME FOR THE PROVERBIAL LOOP!

HAVE TO REMEMBER I'M NOT QUITE AS "SUPER" AS I ONCE WAS.

I WAS MY MOST POWERFUL WHEN I WAS IN MY THIRTIES--



-- BUT AS I'VE GOTTEN OLDER, I'VE NATURALLY GROWN A BIT WEAKER.

WELL, THAT'S ALL RIGHT. I BEGAN MY SUPERMAN CAREER JUST BEING ABLE TO "LEAP TALL BUILDINGS."

I GUESS I CAN END IT THE SAME.





CHAPTER
3

A SWITCH IN TIME!

BLAST THAT MAN! I CAME SO CLOSE TO KILLING HIM, BUT, AS ALWAYS, HE PULLS HIS FAT HEAD OUT OF THE FIRE!

WELL, CLORY FOR NOW, MY DECADES-LONG FOE, ALEXEI LUTHOR WILL NOT REMAIN DEFEATED FOR LONG.



HEY -
WALK ON
SOMEONE
GEE...

HEY, LUTHOR-- MAYBE THEY SHOULD PUT A REVOLVING DOOR IN YOUR CELL!

LAUGH ON, CRETIN, BUT NO PRISON CAN HOLD ME FOR LONG.

SUPERMAN! GAAH, HOW I DESPISE THAT NAME!

MAYBE, LUTHOR, BUT SUPERMAN WILL BRING YOU BACK HERE AS HE ALWAYS DOES.



BUT IF MY PLAN SUCCEEDS I'LL FINALLY BE RID OF IT.

SMITHFIELD! NO ONE IS WATCHING! GET OVER HERE!



I'VE BEEN WAITING FOR YOU, LUTHOR WAITING SO LONG.

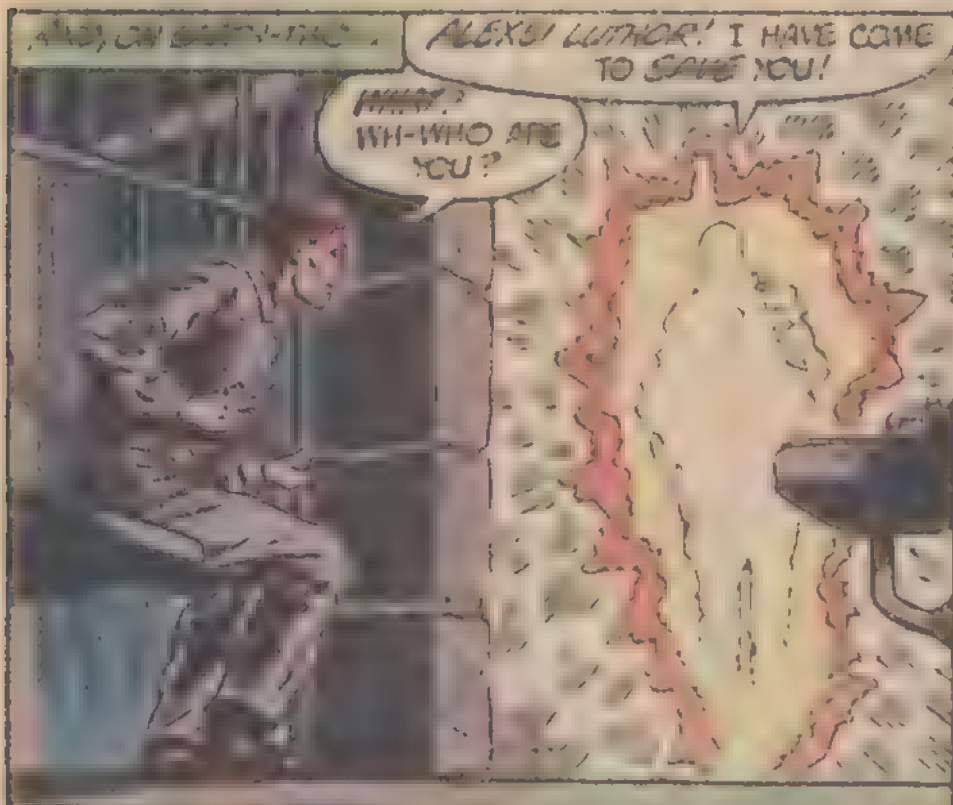
DON'T YOU THINK I AM THAT?



WHO PLANTED YOU IN THIS HELL-HOLE ON THE OFF-CHANCE I WIGHT RETURN HERE?

AND WHO OUTFITTED YOU WITH A WATER-THIN FACE CLOTHING?

... COMPLETE WITH BUILT-IN MICRO-CIRCUITRY?

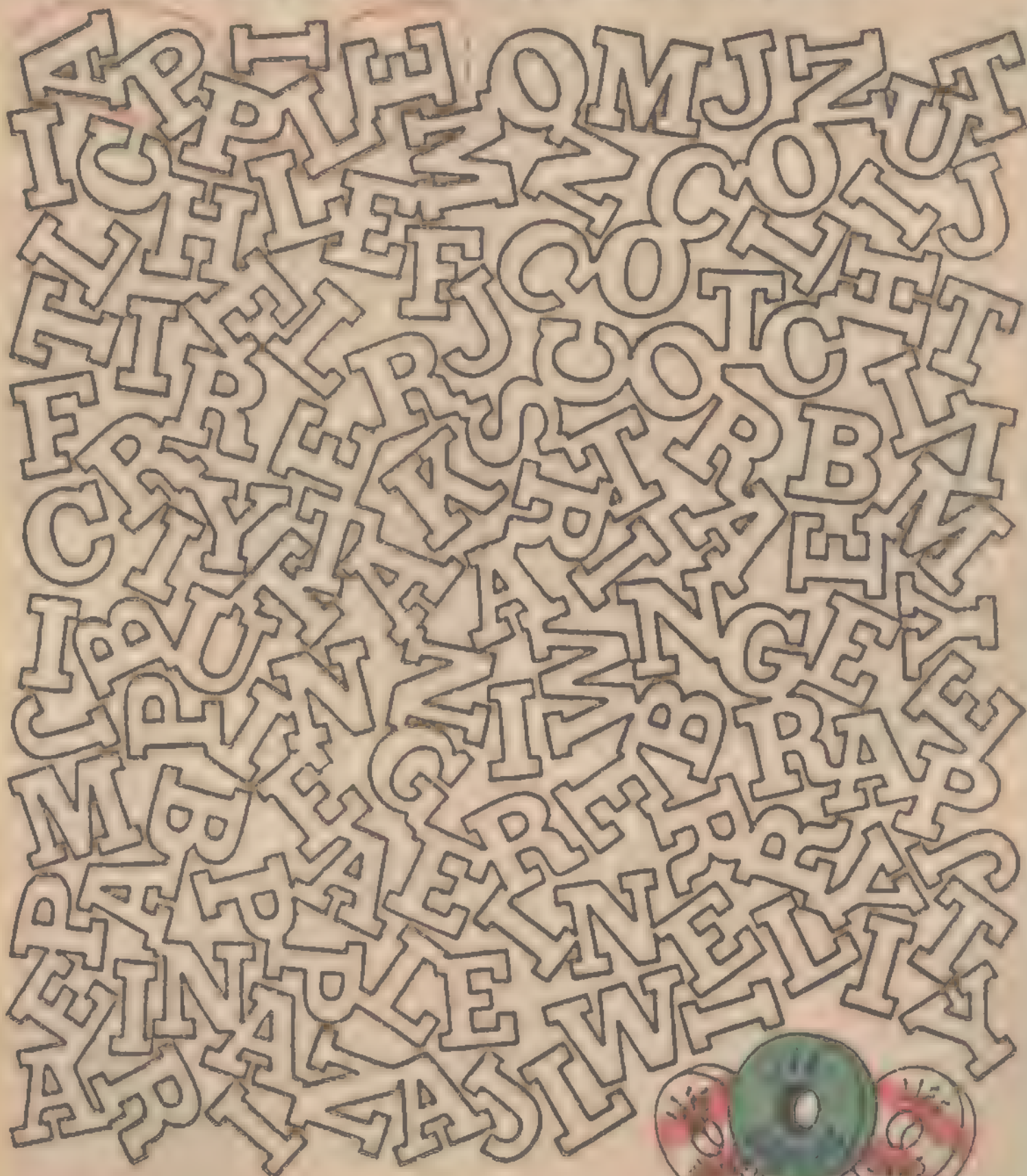


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TIME TO GET OUT OF HERE AND DOWN TO WORK!

GUARDS! GUARDS! HELP! HELP ME!!



HUH? WHO ARE YOU? THIS IS LUTHOR'S CELL!

I-I DON'T KNOW... I WAS IN THE CITY, THEN SUDDENLY I'M HERE!



LUTHOR MANAGED TO ESCAPE AGAIN! WE'RE TRULY SCARED ABOUT THIS, MR...

THORUL... LEN THORUL. NO HARM DONE, EXCEPT FOR MY CLOTHING.



WE CAN GET YOU A SUIT... THAT SHOULD BE NO PROBLEM.

EXCELLENT! LET'S PLEASE HURRY THIS, IF YOU WILL.

AND SOMEONE ELSE...



IT WORKED! I'M ON EARTH-TWO AND I'M FREE!

FREE TO DESTROY THIS WORLD'S SUPERMAN!



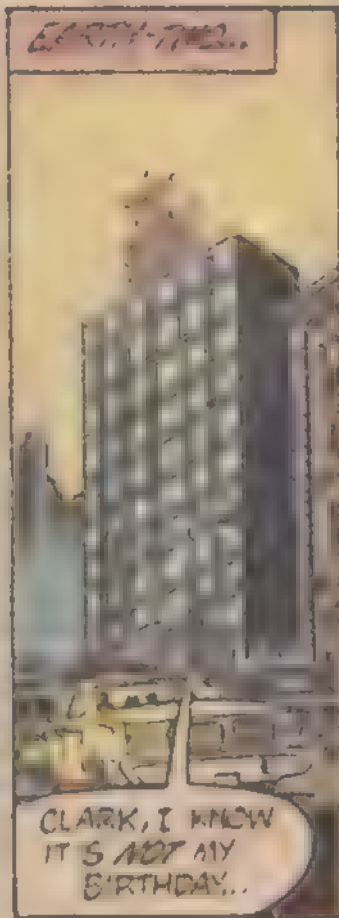
THIS SUPERMAN IS UNAWARE OF MY METHODS--DESTROYING HIM SHOULD BE SIMPLICITY ITSELF.

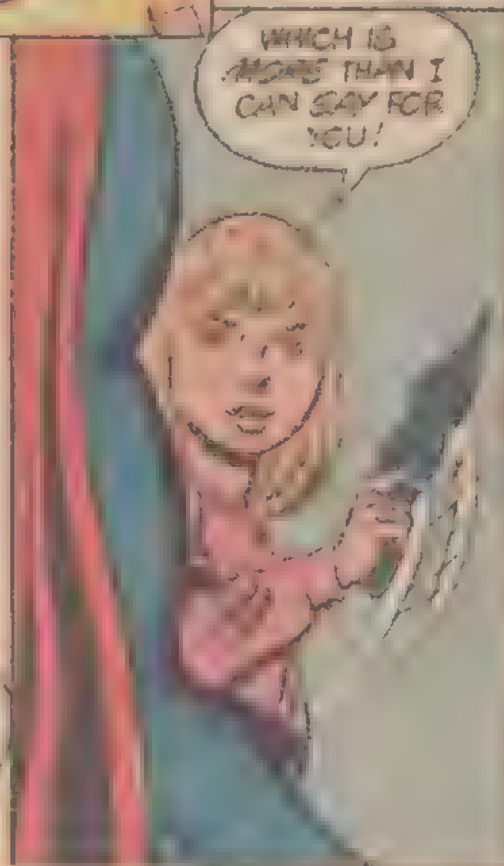
EVEN AS MY COUNTERPART DESTROYS MY MOST HATED FOE.

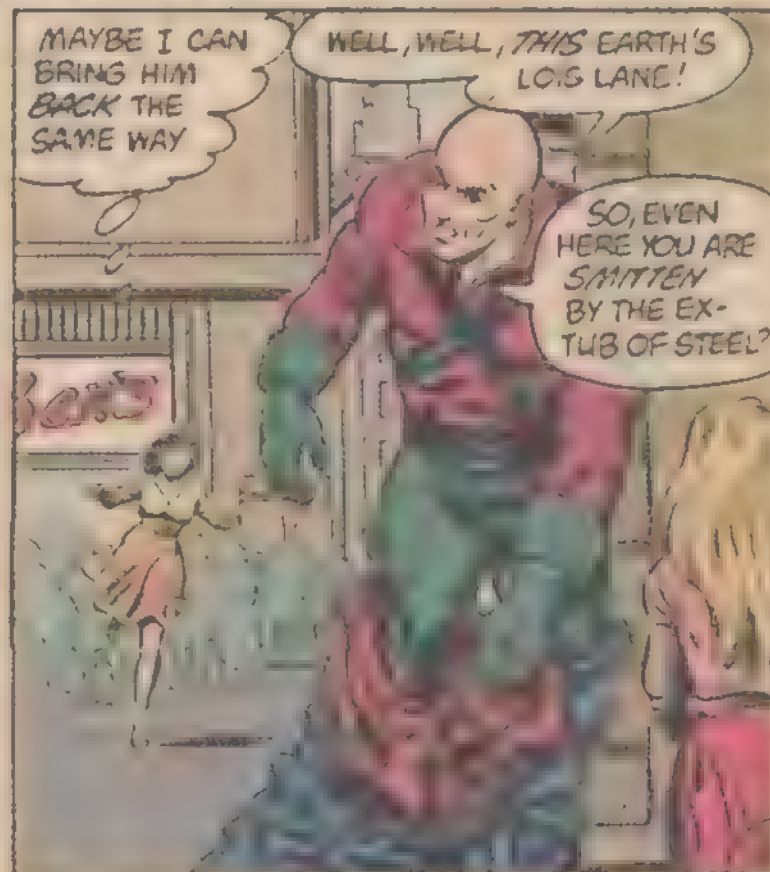
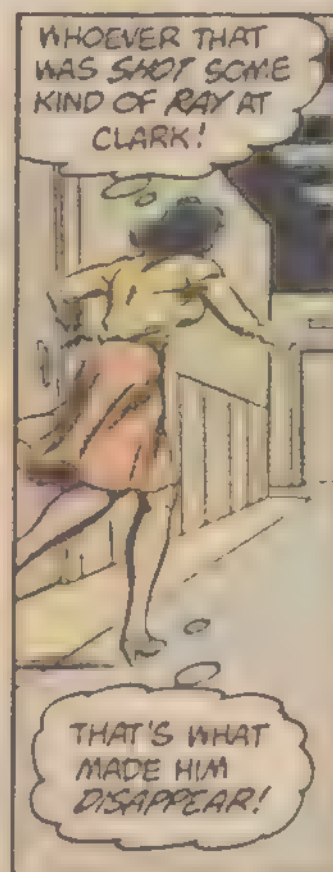
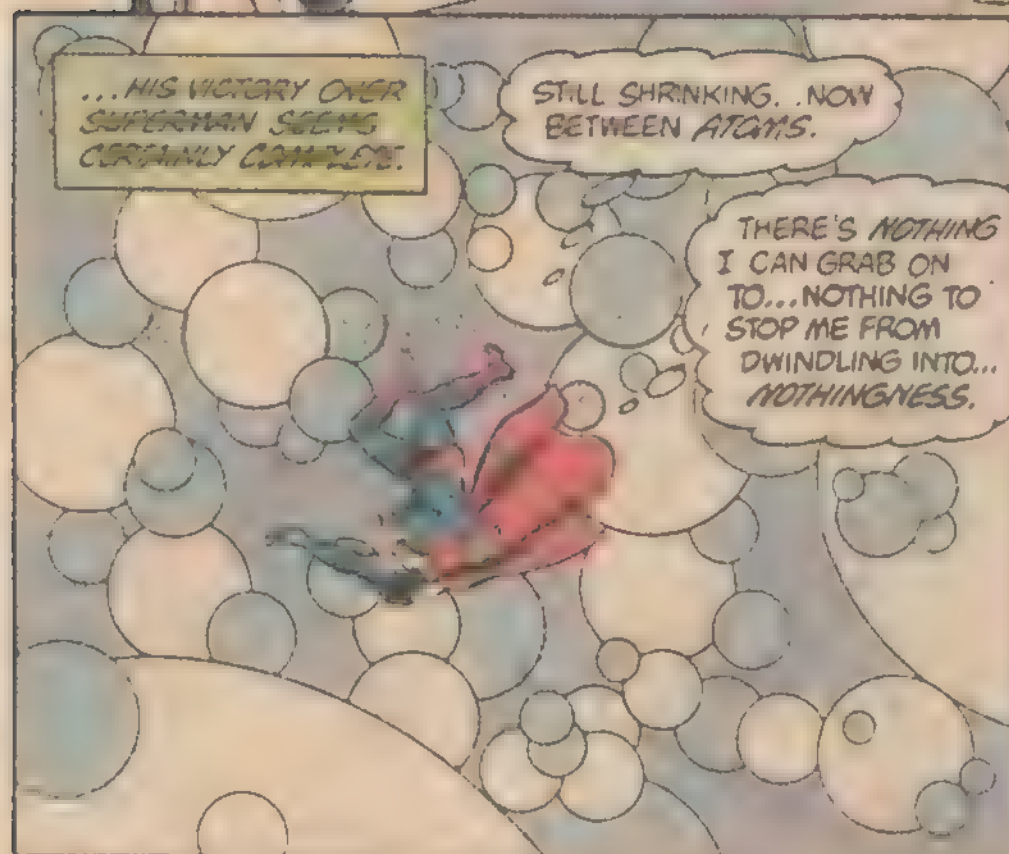
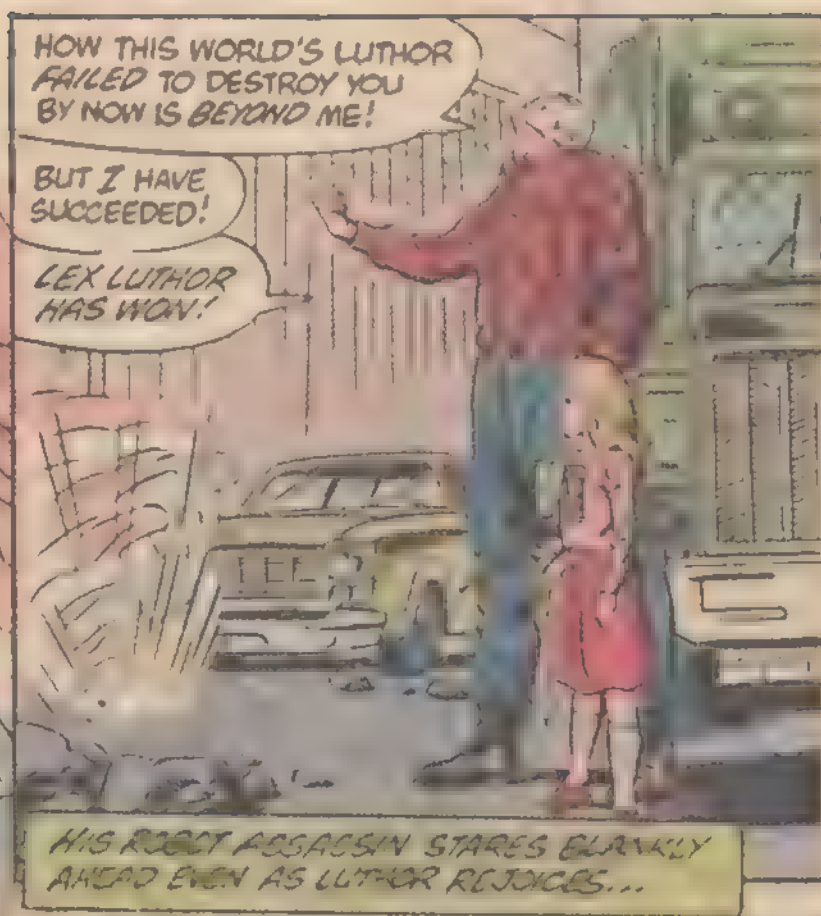
THIS TIME, LUTHOR SAYS... HUH!

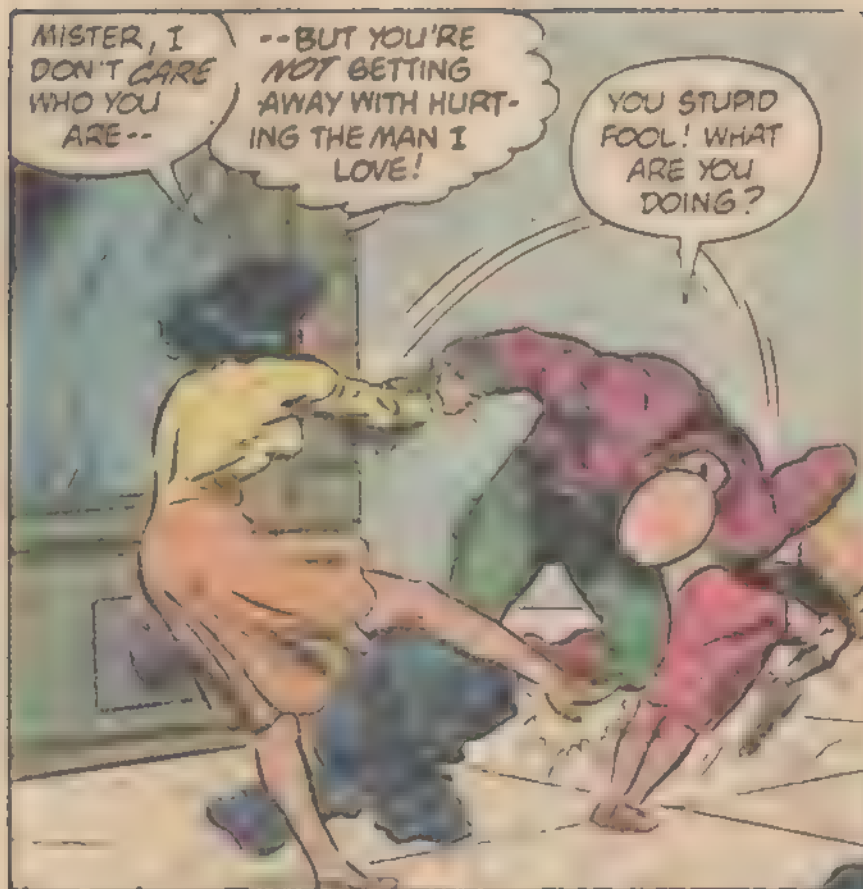








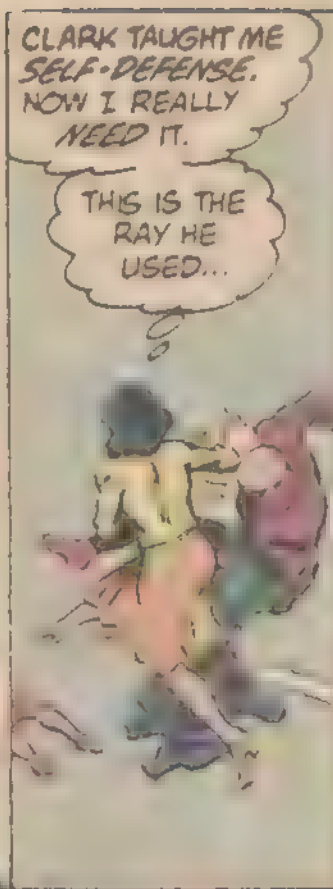




MISTER, I DON'T CARE WHO YOU ARE--

--BUT YOU'RE NOT GETTING AWAY WITH HURTING THE MAN I LOVE!

YOU STUPID FOOL! WHAT ARE YOU DOING?



CLARK TAUGHT ME SELF-DEFENSE. NOW I REALLY NEED IT.

THIS IS THE RAY HE USED...

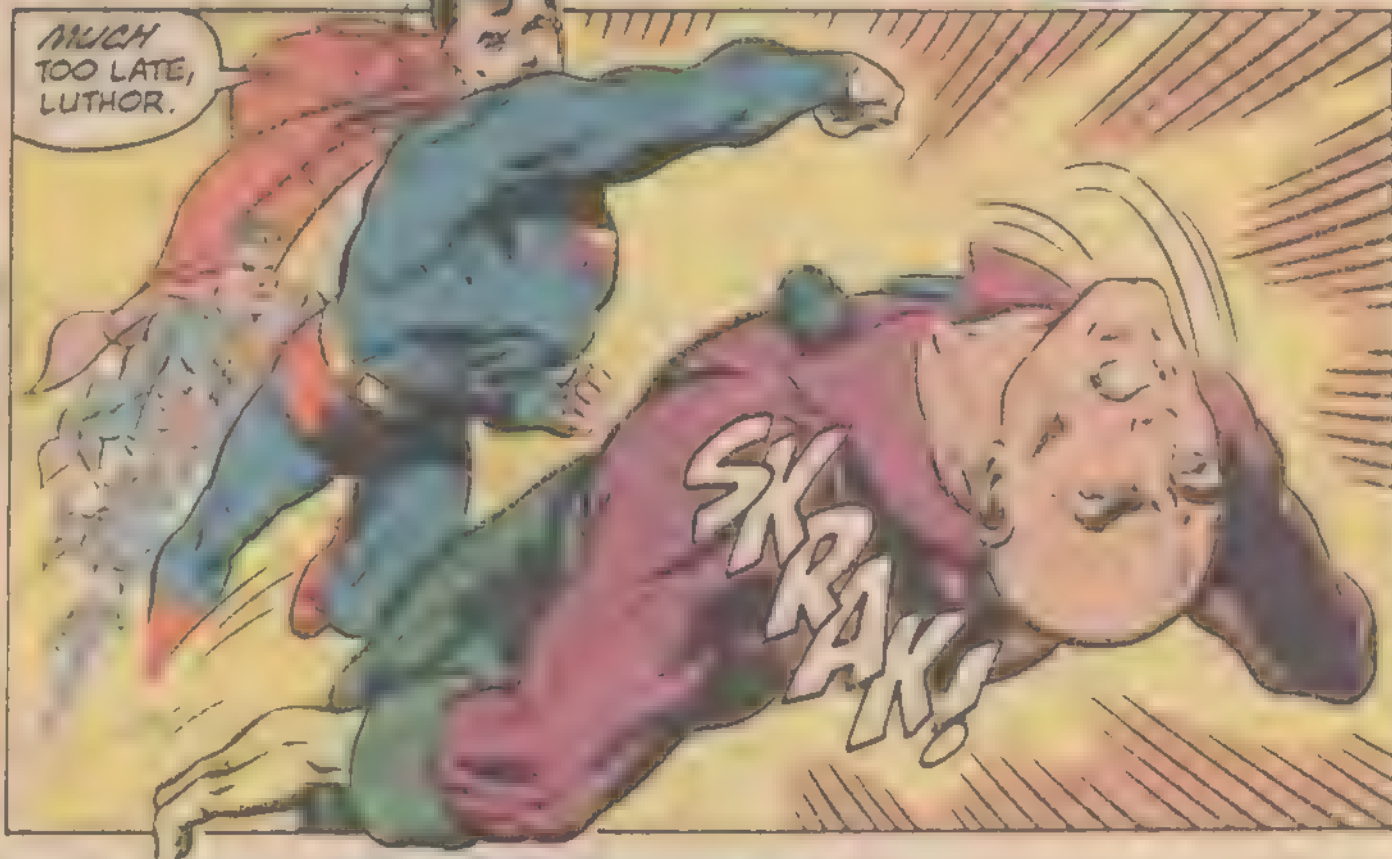


THANK HEAVEN! IT HAS A REVERSAL SWITCH!

STOP IT, LANE!



TOO LATE, MISTER.



MUCH TOO LATE, LUTHOR.



LUTHOR? BUT HE DOESN'T LOOK--

HE'S THE OTHER EARTH'S LUTHOR, HONEY...



...WHICH MAKES ME WONDER WHAT'S HAPPENED TO MY ARCH-FOE!

HMMM. CROWDS ARE FORMING. IT WOULDN'T DO FOR LOIS KENT TO HANG AROUND SUPERMAN.

OH, DON'T WORRY ABOUT THAT. I'M A REPORTER-- AND YOU'RE CERTAINLY HOT NEWS!

STILL, MY OTHER-EARTH COUNTERPART COULD BE IN SERIOUS TROUBLE. I'VE GOT TO WARN HIM.

BE CAREFUL... PLEASE!

MEANWHILE, WHAT OF EARTH-ONE'S METROPOLIS MARVEL?

THESE GRAVITY CABLES ARE EXERTING THE SAME GRAVITY FORCE AS KRYPTON...

...ROBBING ME OF ABOUT HALF MY POWERS!

NOT TO MENTION DRAGGING ME ACROSS THE GALAXY TOWARD THAT BLACK HOLE!

BUT THIS TRAP JUST MAY HAVE BEEN HIS UNDOING! A BLACK HOLE IS A COLLAPSED STAR WITH AN INCREDIBLE GRAVITY PULL...

I MAY NOT BE PULLED APART FOR AWHILE YET, BUT THEY CAN'T POSSIBLY WITHSTAND THE PRESSURE FOR MUCH LONGER.

IT'S PUTTING A STRAIN ON THESE BINDING CABLES.

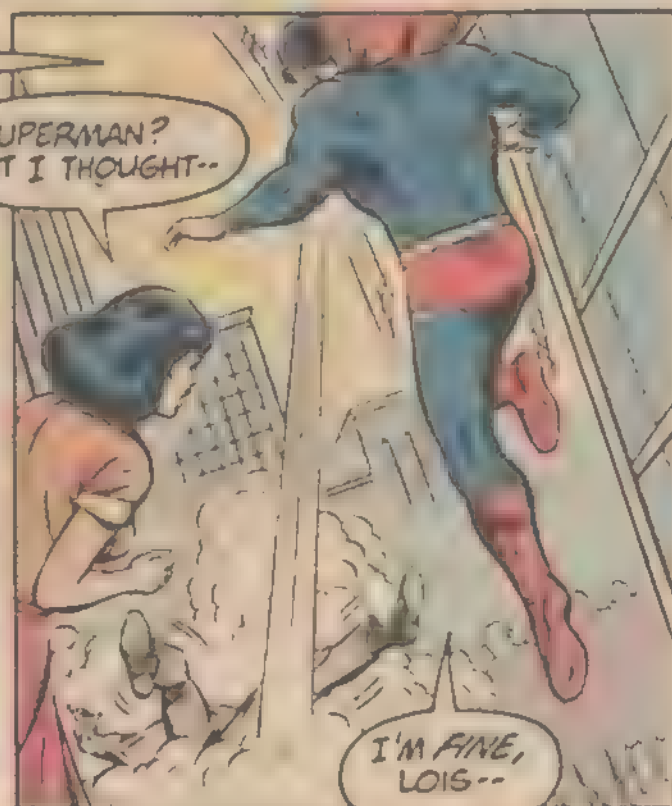
THERE--!

JUST WISH I KNEW WHO HE WAS! HE'S OBVIOUSLY BRILLIANT, MAYBE A MATCH FOR LUTHOR--

WELL, WHOEVER HE IS, HE CAN'T HAVE GOTTEN FAR.

-- AND I CERTAINLY DON'T NEED TWO CRAZED GENIUSES OUT TO GET ME.

I'LL FIND HIM!



THOUSANDS OF MILES AWAY, IN THE FROZEN NORTHERN REGIONS OF THE ARCTIC CIRCLE...

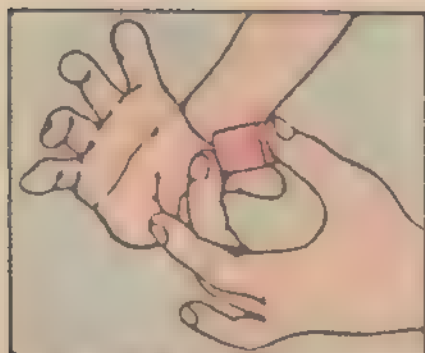


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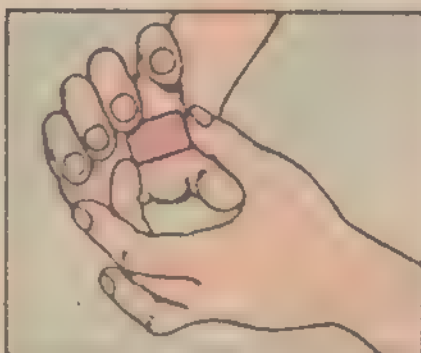
The magic in gum is Bubble Yum.



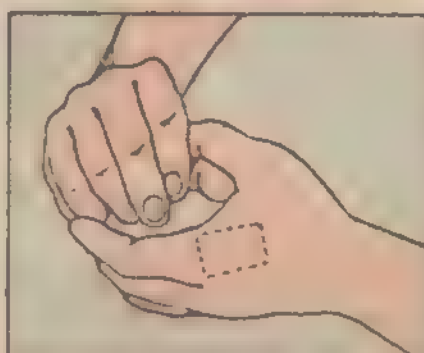
Try this magic trick with your next piece.



Hold the Bubble Yum between the thumb and middle finger of your left hand.



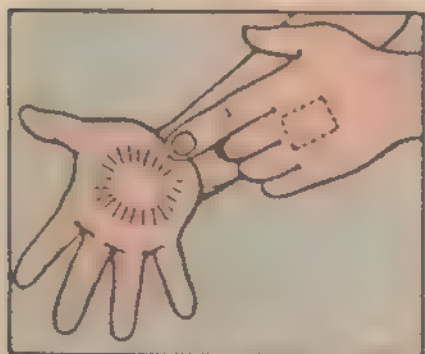
Pretend to grab it with your right hand while you really drop it into the palm of your left hand.



Keep the fingers of your right hand loose as if they had the gum.



Point with the left hand while you secretly hold the gum in your palm.

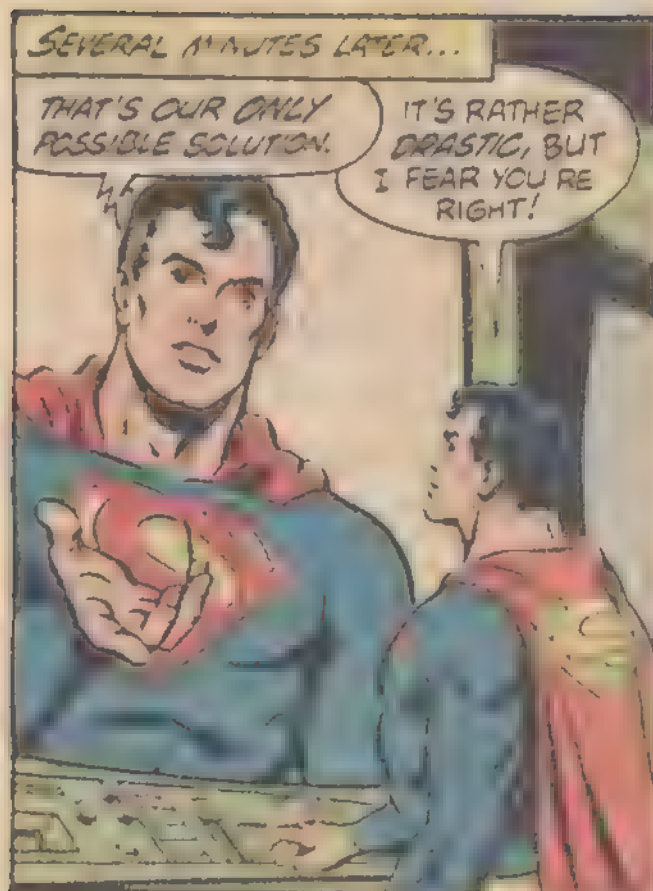


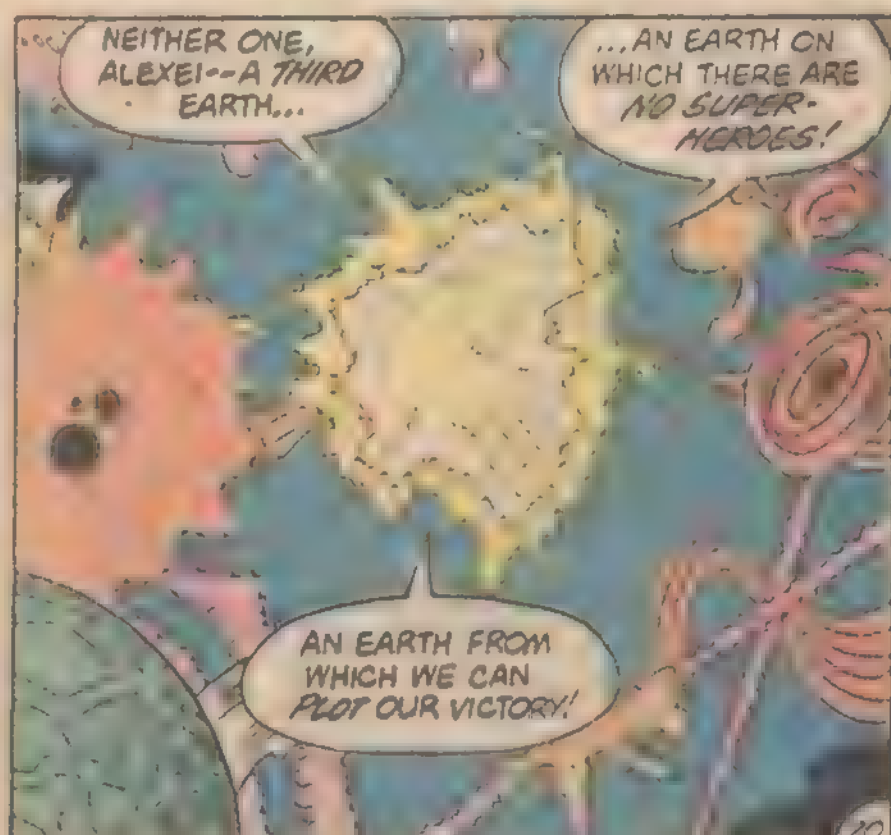
Say "Presto chango!" and open your right hand to show that the Bubble Yum has magically disappeared.



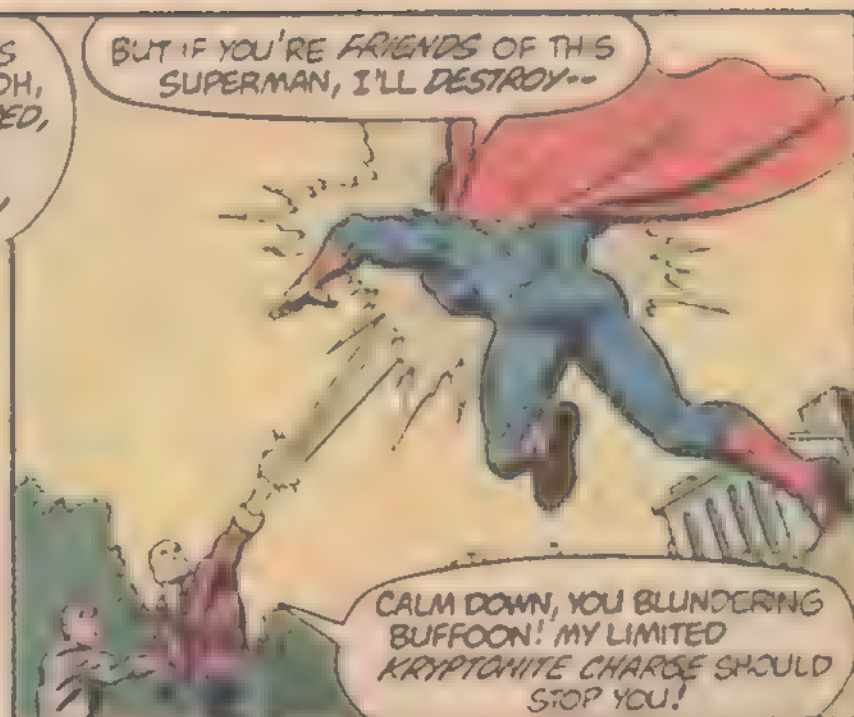
Then you can make the Bubble Yum disappear the easy way—and try the number one taste.

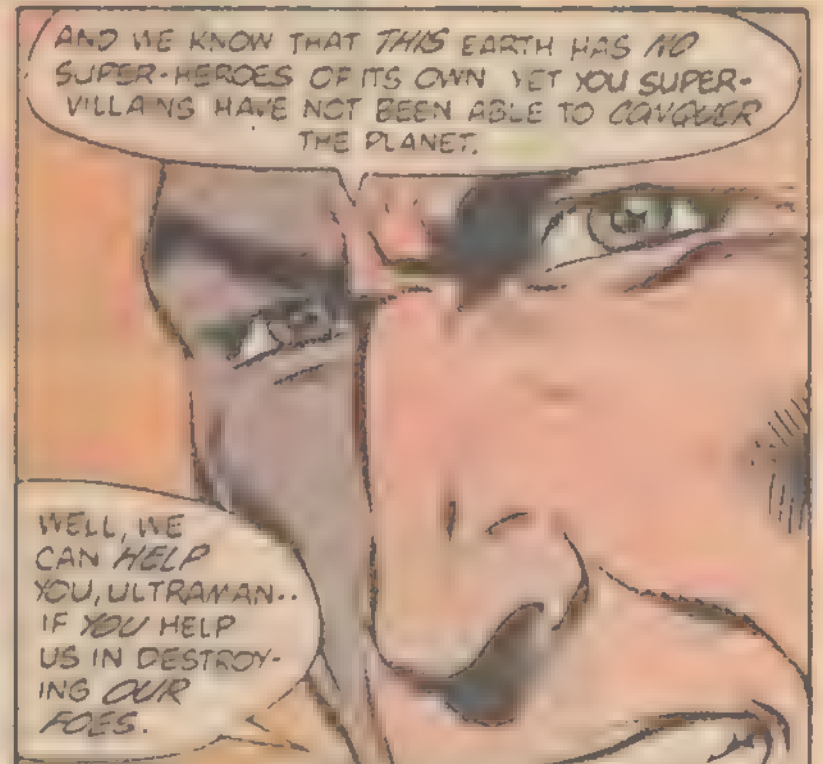
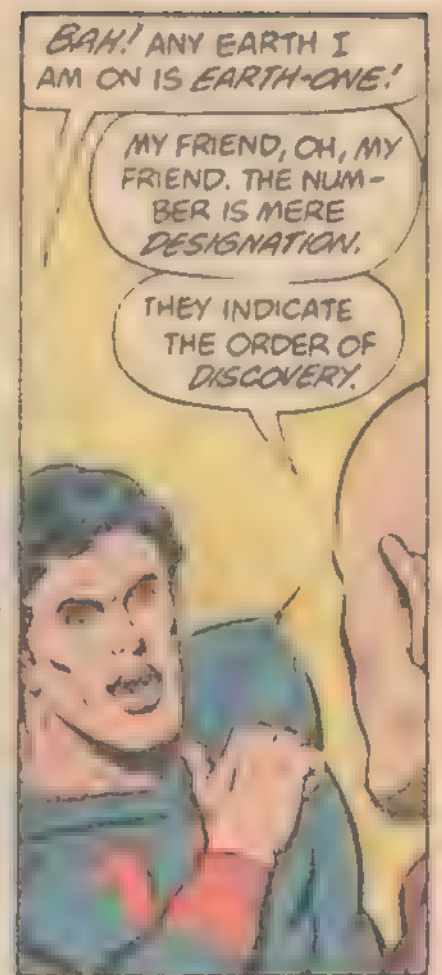
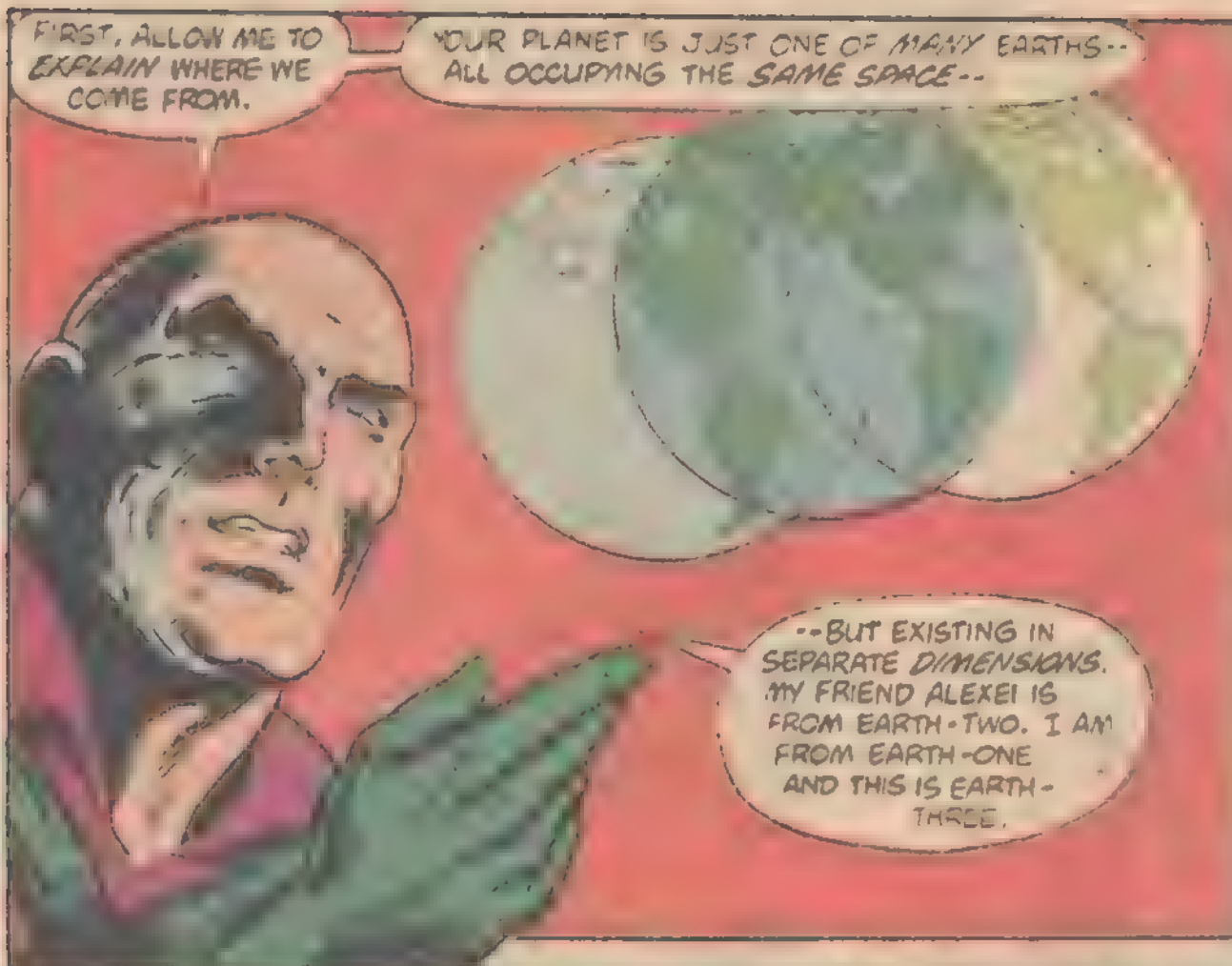












CHAPTER
5

THE SUMMONING SUPERMAN

PUT THAT
DOWN OVER THERE,
ULTRAMAN. I'LL
GET TO IT LATER.

WHAT ARE YOU
DOING WITH AN ION
TRACTOR BEAM?
THAT ISN'T PART
OF OUR PLAN

I CAN'T PULL
THE WOOL
OVER YOUR EYES,
CAN I, LEX?



I HAVE TO ADMIT I KEEP FORGETTING
THAT YOU'RE *ALMOST* AS BRILLIANT
AS I AM.

I WON'T *HONOR*
THAT WITH A RETORT,
ALEXEI.

NOW HOW ABOUT
AN ANSWER?

VERY WELL, LEX--YOU KNOW ION
RAYS CAN PENETRATE THE *DIMEN-*
SIONAL BARRIER...

YOU'RE NOT
SPEAKING TO
A GRADUATE
SCHOOL
DROPOUT.
GET TO THE
POINT!



VERY WELL, LEX. THE POINT
SIMPLY IS-- WITH MY ION
TRACTOR BEAM--

--I INTEND
TO *DESTROY*
EARTH'S ONE
AND TWO!

WHAT?!!



AT THIS SELF-SAME MOMENT, ACROSS THE STREETS OF EARTH-THREE'S VAST METROPOLIS...



YOU WERE RIGHT, MISS LANE. THEY ARE UP TO SOMETHING

I'M PICKING UP AN EXTREME CONCENTRATION OF ION RAYS.



THAT'S WHY I CAME TO YOU, ALEX -- I CAN CALL YOU ALEX, CAN'T I, DR. LUTHOR?

OF COURSE, MISS LANE.

LOIS.

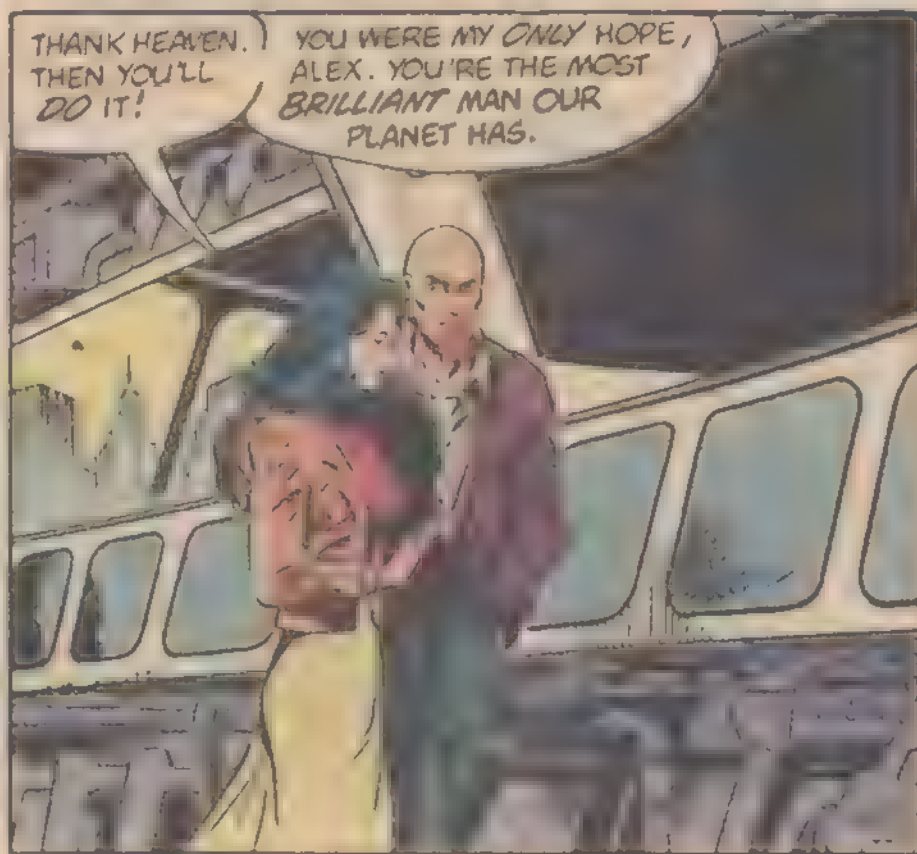
AND MY IDEA... THE ONLY WAY WE CAN STOP THEM? WHAT DO YOU THINK?



IT'S RISKY, DANGEROUS TO SAY THE LEAST. NOTHING LIKE THIS HAS EVER HAPPENED ON OUR WORLD BEFORE--

--AND FRANKLY, LOIS, THE VERY THOUGHT OF IT FRIGHTENS ME.

BUT YOU ARE RIGHT. THERE IS NO OTHER WAY.



THANK HEAVEN. THEN YOU'LL DO IT!

YOU WERE MY ONLY HOPE, ALEX. YOU'RE THE MOST BRILLIANT MAN OUR PLANET HAS.

ONE MYSTERY DEVELOPS. BUT, IN ANOTHER DIMENSION, ON THE WORLD WE CALL EARTH-TWO...



KAL-L, YOUR WORLD IS AS BEAUTIFUL AS MY OWN.

AND YOUR METROPOLIS IS JUST AS INSPIRING.

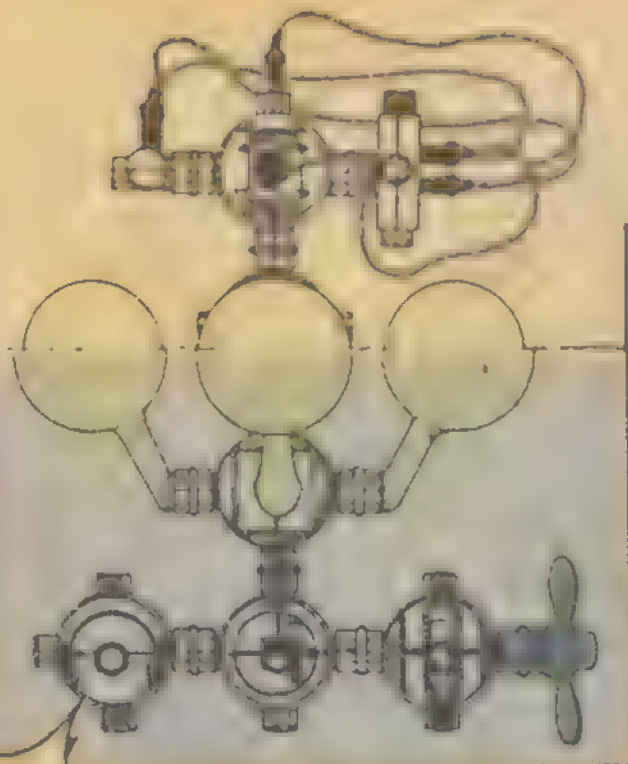
THANK YOU FOR ASKING ME HERE. MY TRIPS TO EARTH-TWO HAVE BEEN FEW, BUT I DO ENJOY THEM

MY WIFE SUGGESTED I BRING YOU HERE. I THINK SHE WAS RIGHT.

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New York, NY 10010

SHE'S ALSO THE ONE WHO SAVED ME FROM YOUR LUTHORS TRAP.

YOUR LOSS... YOU LOVE HER VERY MUCH, DON'T YOU?

MORE THAN I EVER THOUGHT I COULD, CONSIDERING HOW ROCKY OUR LOVE-LIFE BEGAN.

SHE WAS ALWAYS SNOOPING AROUND, TRYING TO LEARN MY SECRET IDENTITY. I THOUGHT SHE WAS JUST A PEST THEN.

BUT NOW, I LOVE HER AND I WONDER WHY I RESISTED THE IDEA OF MARRYING HER FOR SO LONG.

I JUST NEVER WANTED TO ADMIT TO MYSELF THAT SHE WAS THE ONLY WOMAN FOR ME. I'M GLAD I FINALLY DID.

WHAT ABOUT YOU AND YOUR LOIS?

OH, I LOVE HER. BUT MARRIAGE--? I DON'T KNOW.

I'VE GOT SO MUCH TO DO. A WHOLE WORLD TO CARE FOR.

IT WOULD BE SELFISH FOR ME TO CARE ABOUT MYSELF WHEN THERE ARE MILLIONS OUT THERE WHO NEED ME.

AND WHAT KIND OF LIFE COULD I GIVE LOIS? I WOULDN'T BE AROUND HALF THE TIME.

YOU DON'T KNOW HOW OFTEN I ASKED MYSELF THOSE VERY QUESTIONS.

I WASTED SO MUCH TIME BEFORE I CAME UP WITH THE ANSWER.

YES, THERE ARE MILLIONS OUT THERE, MANY MORE MILLIONS THAN I COULD EVER HOPE TO HELP

SO I BECAME OBSESSED WITH HELPING EVERYONE. OH, I DID SO HAPPILY, BUT SOMETHING INSIDE ME WAS MISSING.

OUR NAME IS
SUPERMAN
THAT'S SUPER
AND MAN. AND I
WAS ALLOWING MY-
SELF TO BE CON-
TROLLED ONLY BY
THE
SUPER

I FINALLY DECIDED
AFTER ALL TOO
LONG THAT I DE-
SERVED SOME
HAPPINESS. THE
MAN IN ME HAD
A RIGHT TO LIVE.

WELL, ONCE I MADE THAT DECISION
SOMETHING HAPPENED I FOUND A
RENEWED VISOR WITHIN ME.

BECAUSE OF THE LOVE
LOIS AND I SHARED, I
BECAME AN EVEN BETTER
SUPERMAN THAN BEFORE.

I TELL YOU, MARRYING
LOIS KEPT MY SANITY
TOGETHER YOU SHOULD--

I HAD LOIS. I HAD
HAPPINESS, AND THERE I WAS
WITH THIS RENEWED COM-
MITMENT TO HELPING
OTHERS, TOO.

ATTENTION!

I NEED
YOUR HELP!

I AM THE LUTHOR
OF EARTH-THREE.

LUTHOR? THEN
HE'S A VILLAIN,
TOO?

NOT NECESSARILY. REMEMBER,
THEIR SUPERMAN IS A VILLAIN
NAMED ULTRAMAN.

THEN EXPLAIN
WHAT'S HAPPENING
TO US. WE'RE
BEING ABDUCTED.

MAYBE NOT
REMEMBER, HE
ASKED FOR OUR
HELP.

LET'S GIVE HIM
A CHANCE TO
EXPLAIN.



CHAPTER
6

EARTH'S FIRST SUPERHERO!

WHY HAVE YOU BROUGHT US HERE, LUTHOR?

THE WOMAN BEHIND YOU LOOKS LIKE--

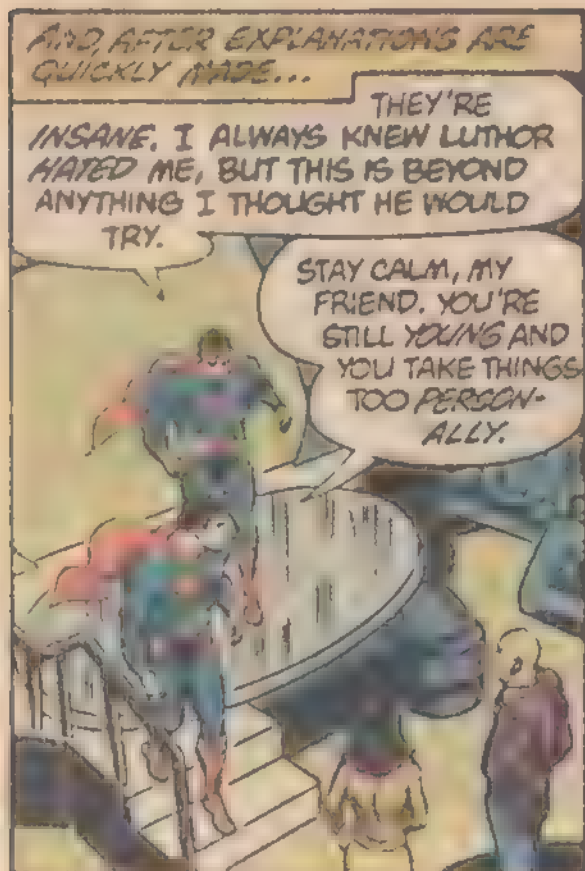
LOIS LANE. SHE'S A REPORTER, AND SHE IS THE REASON I'VE SUMMONED YOU HERE

PLEASE, BE PATIENT AND LISTEN. I FEAR BOTH YOUR EARTHS ARE DOOMED IF YOU FAIL TO HEED MY WARNING!

IS THAT A THREAT, LUTHOR?

NO, NO, MY FRIEND... I AM HERE TO HELP...

IT IS MY NAMESAKES YOU HAVE TO FEAR, NOT ME!



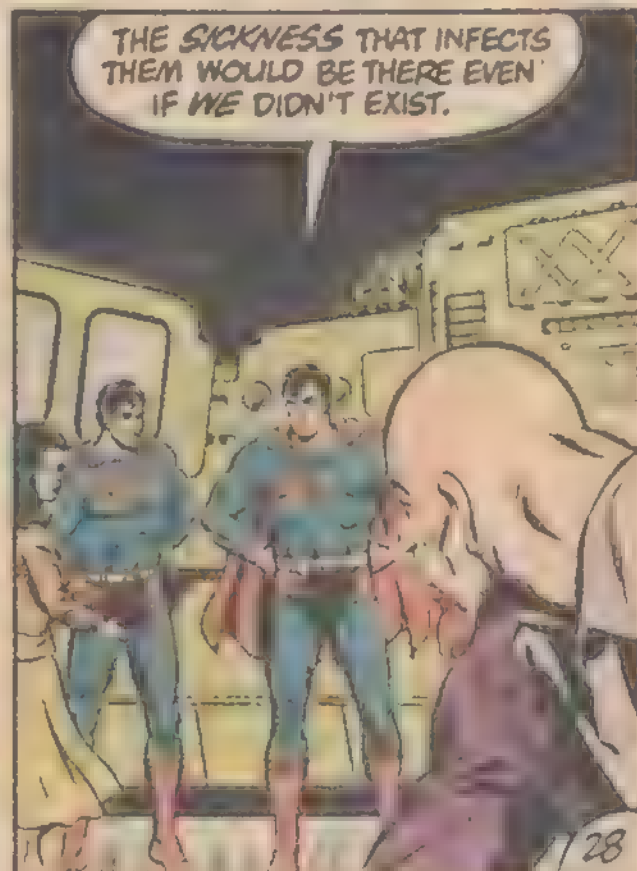
AND, AFTER EXPLANATIONS ARE QUICKLY MADE...

THEY'RE INSANE. I ALWAYS KNEW LUTHOR HATED ME, BUT THIS IS BEYOND ANYTHING I THOUGHT HE WOULD TRY.

STAY CALM, MY FRIEND. YOU'RE STILL YOUNG AND YOU TAKE THINGS TOO PERSONALLY.



THIS ISN'T BEING AIMED AT EITHER YOU OR ME, NO MATTER WHAT THE LUTHORS MIGHT INSIST.



THE SICKNESS THAT INFECTS THEM WOULD BE THERE EVEN IF WE DIDN'T EXIST.





AT LAST CASE AS I AM IN SAYING THIS-- BEHOLD:

EARTH-THREE'S
FIRST SUPER-
HERO!

DOESN'T
ALEX LOOK
WONDERFUL?

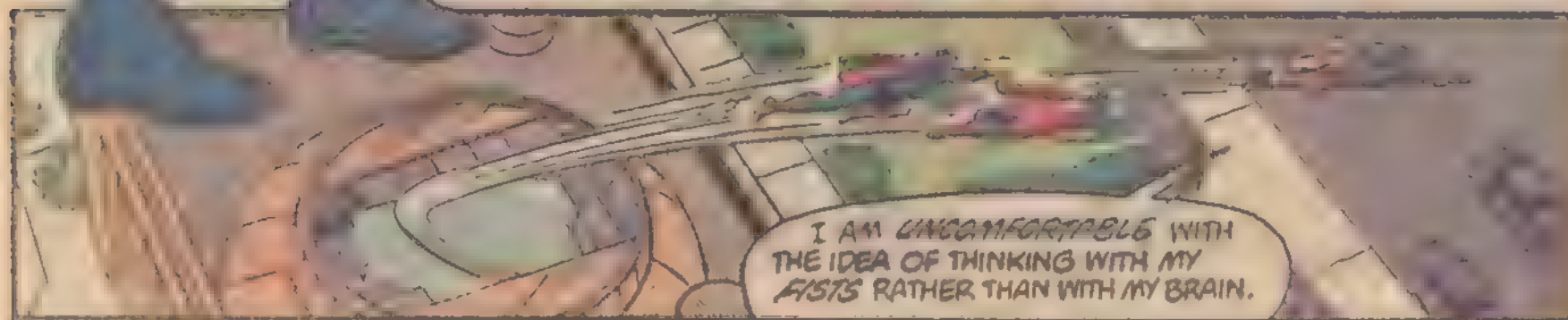
WHAT ARE
YOU GOING TO
CALL YOURSELF,
LUTHOR?



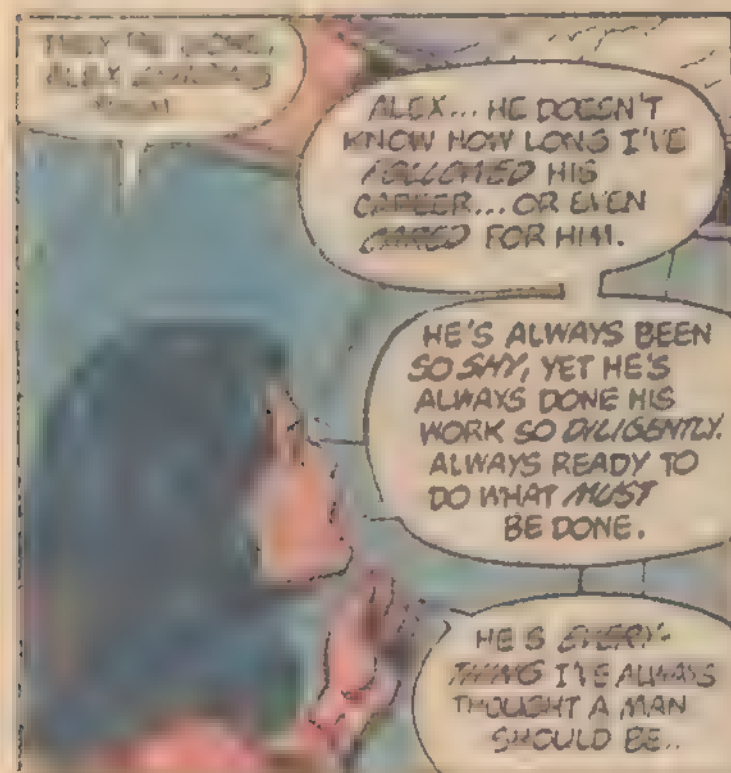
MAYBE I'M FORCED TO WEAR
THIS SUIT AND TO WIELD THE
WEAPONS I'VE BUILT INTO IT--

--BUT I WOULD FEEL
DOWNRIGHT SILLY GIVING
MYSELF A SUPER-HERO
SOURRIQUET!

LET ME OPEN
THE ROOFTOP
ZONE AND LET'S
GET GOV WITH
WHAT MUST BE
DONE!



I AM UNCOMFORTABLE WITH
THE IDEA OF THINKING WITH MY
FISTS RATHER THAN WITH MY BRAIN.



THEY'RE DONE,
ALEX... HE'S
GONE!

ALEX... HE DOESN'T
KNOW HOW LONG I'VE
FOLLOWED HIS
CAREER... OR EVEN
CARED FOR HIM.

HE'S ALWAYS BEEN
SO SHY, YET HE'S
ALWAYS DONE HIS
WORK SO DILIGENTLY.
ALWAYS READY TO
DO WHAT MUST
BE DONE.

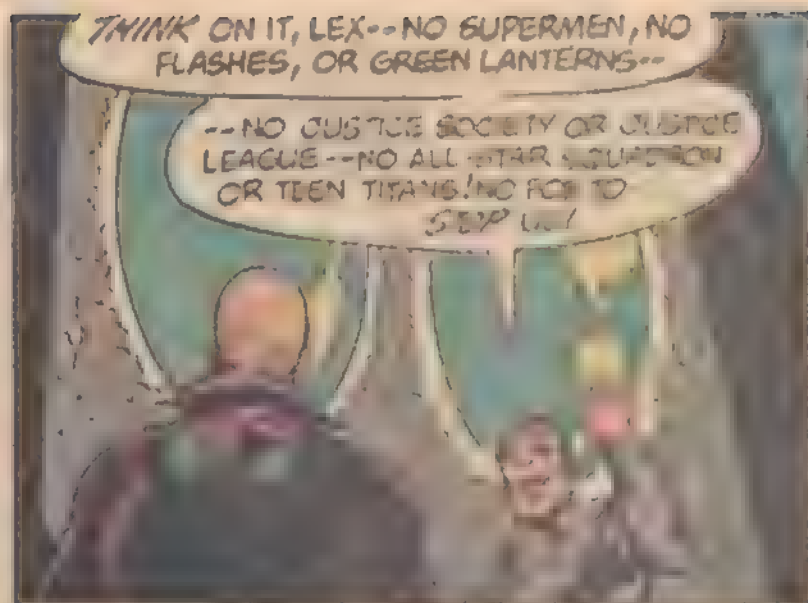
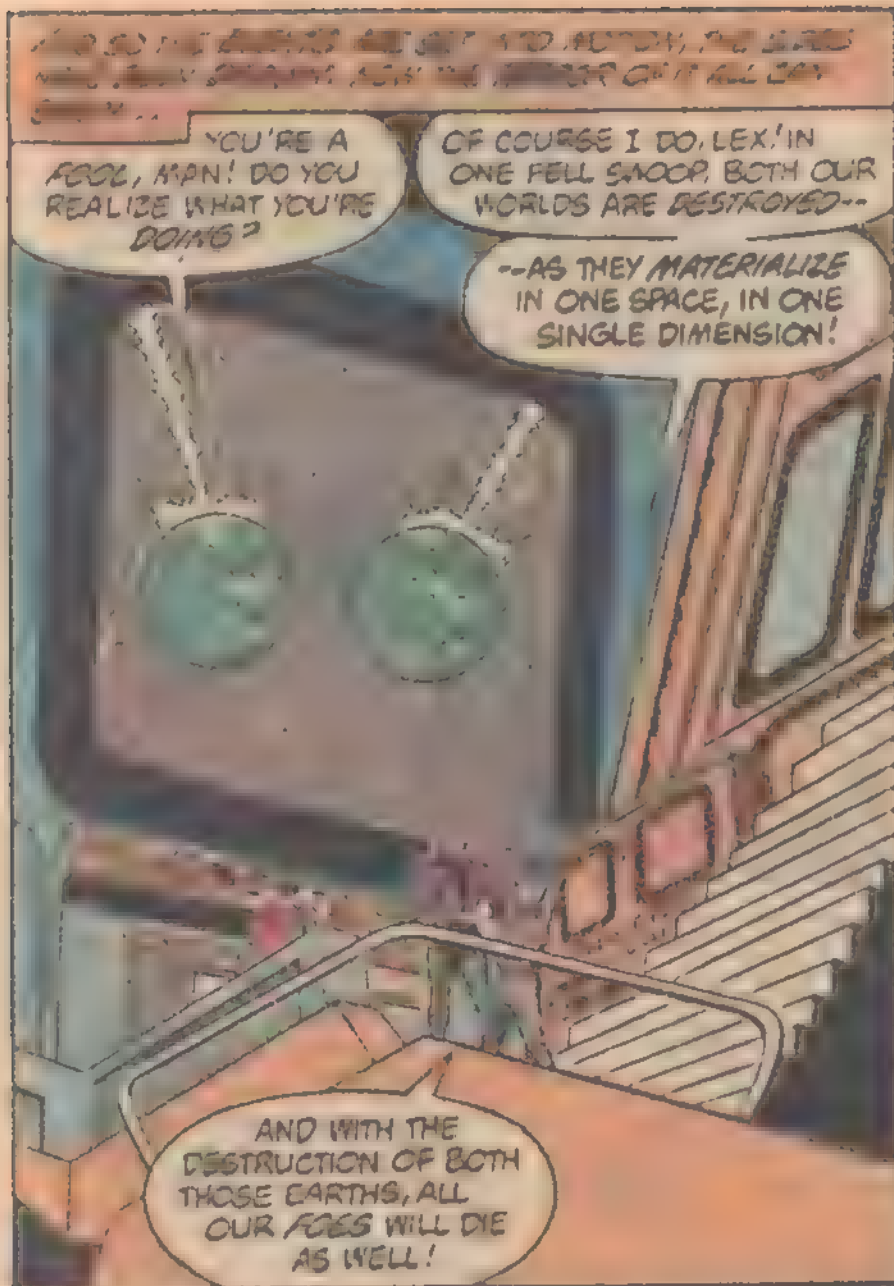
HE'S EVERY-
THING I'VE ALWAYS
THOUGHT A MAN
SHOULD BE...



... AND I... I'VE
TURNED HIM INTO
OUR FIRST
HERO!

MY GOD! THE
POSSIBILITIES...

...THE
POSSIBILITIES.





IF WE ARE TO RULE THIS EARTH, THEY MUST NOT BE PERMITTED TO THWART MY PLANS!

YOU KNOW YOUR DUTY, ULTIMATELY. DESTROY THEM!

DON'T WORRY ABOUT ME, LUTHOR.

I'LL OWE THEM FOR MY LAST IMPRISONMENT!



AND ONCE I'VE BROKE THEM BACK, I'M COMING FOR YOU!



YOU TREAT ME LIKE SOME MODERN CHILD, TALK TO ME LIKE I'M AN IDIOT!

WELL, I'M NEITHER AS YOU AND THESE TWO SUPERMEN SHALL LEARN!

SPANK!



HE'S STOPPED THE TWO SUPERMEN-- HOW CAN I POSSIBLY FIGHT HIM?

THIS IS A FOOLISH MISTAKE, A FLIGHT OF FANCY THAT WILL KILL ME!

BEING A SUPER-HERO ISN'T FOR A MORTAL!



YOUR KIND HAS ALWAYS PUT ME DOWN--

NOW IT'S MY TURN, SUPERMAN! MY TURN TO SHOW WHO'S THE MASTER, AND WHO'S THE CLOWN!

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BETTER!

ULTRAMAN
IS YOUR
MASTER!

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JUST BEING
BATTERED
DOWN...

NO TIME TO
RECUPERATE.

SHOCK



ARE YOU REALLY? THEN
TURN AGAINST ME, MY
FRIEND--

ALL I HAVE IS A
SIMPLE BIO-SUIT.
SEE IF YOU CAN
WREAK YOUR HANDS
AGAINST SOMEONE
LIKE ME!



I'LL BE GLAD
TO, OLD MAN!

I'LL WIPE THE FLOOR
WITH ALL OF YOU.

THEN
NO ONE
WILL ATTACK
ME AGAIN!



WHAT'S ALEX DOING?
EVEN WITH HIS SUIT, HE
CAN'T SURVIVE ONE OF
ULTRAMAN'S PUNCHES!

HE'S COMMITTING
SUICIDE STANDING
THERE!

COME ON--
DO YOUR
DUTY!



I'LL DO MORE THAN THAT, OLD MAN!

I'LL SHATTER EVERY
LOUSY BONE IN YOUR--



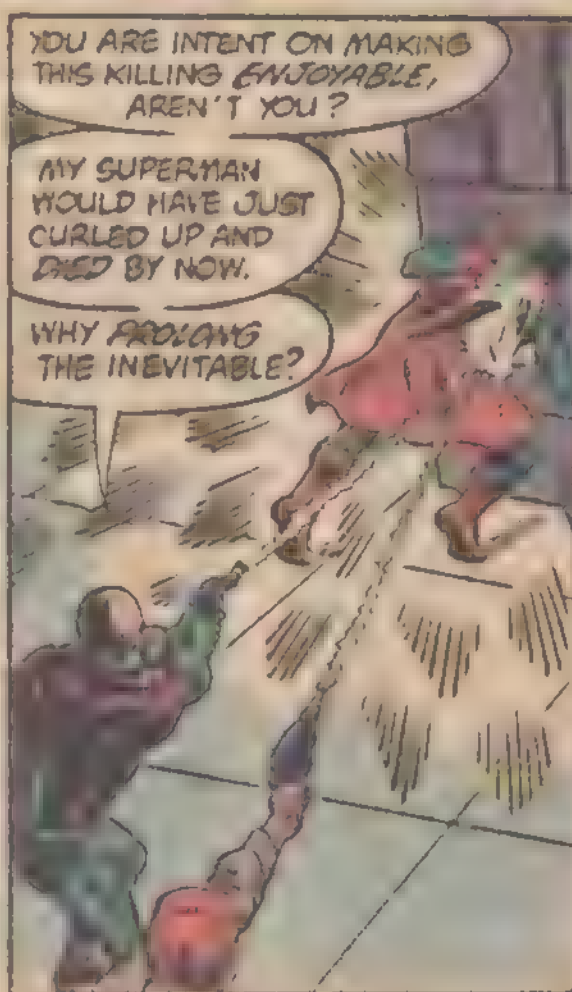
WHA--?!

MY HAND-- IT'S GOING RIGHT
THROUGH YOU!

YOU'RE
GONNA
PAY, AREN'T YOU,
MY FRIEND?







SGT ROCK

**IS ON THE MOVE
IN 82!**



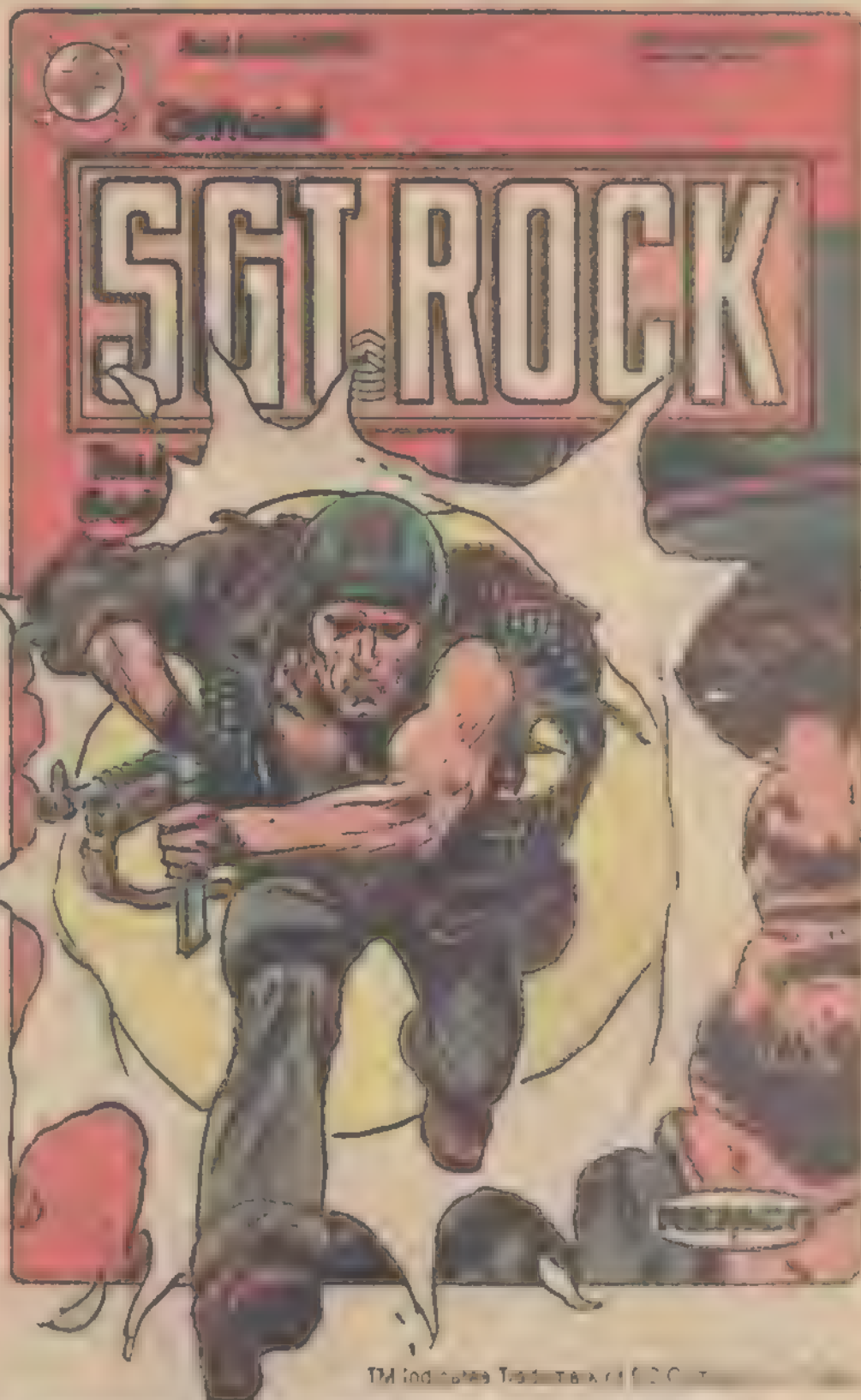
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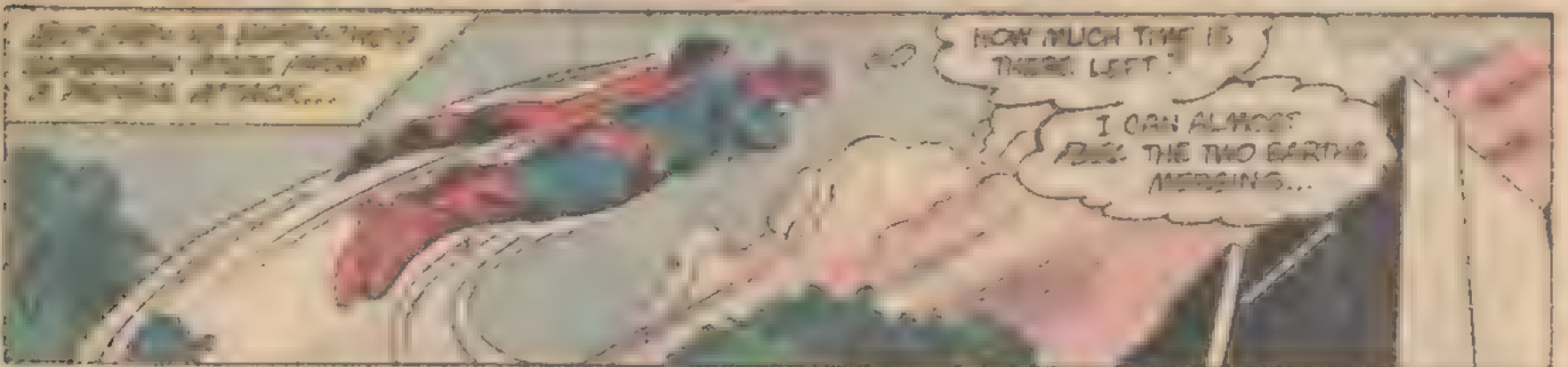


ALL THROUGHOUT HISTORY, THERE HAVE BEEN ADVERSITIES LIKE YOU TWO!

YOU ALWAYS FETTER THE GREATER WEARERS, YET THROUGHOUT HISTORY, THERE HAVE BEEN THOSE WHO ADVENT BACK!

NO DICTATOR HAS EVER SURVIVED FOREVER!

NOT NOW, NOT EVER AGAIN! NOTHING CAN EVER STOP SOMEONE LIKE YOURSELF FROM FIGHTING FOR THE FIGHT!



LET THEM BE... THE ONLY THING THAT CAN STOP A PERSON FROM ATTACKING...

HOW MUCH TIME IS THERE LEFT?

I CAN ALMOST FEEL THE TWO EARTHS MESSING...



IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT, WHEN NO ONE WAS ASLEEP AND I WAS THE LITTLE...

WELL, THIS RAY-DEVICE WILL SEND ME TO THAT PLACE...



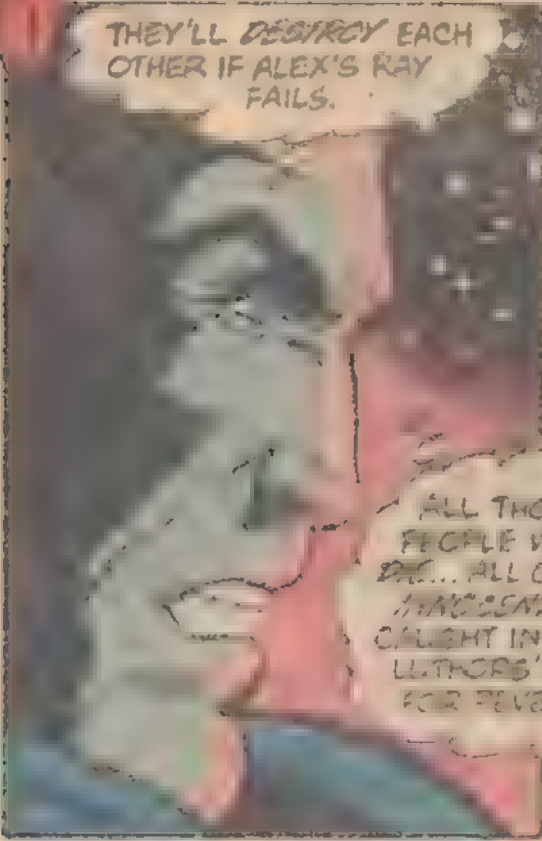
AND WITH WHAT ALEX GAVE ME...

I CAN ONLY SAY THAT I AM GOING TO SAVE THE WORLD!



IT'S ALMOST OVER.
RAO, I ONLY HAVE
MOMENTS BEFORE
THE WORLDS MEET--

--BEFORE BOTH
PLANETS TRY TO DESTROY
THE SAME SPACE AT
THE SAME TIME!



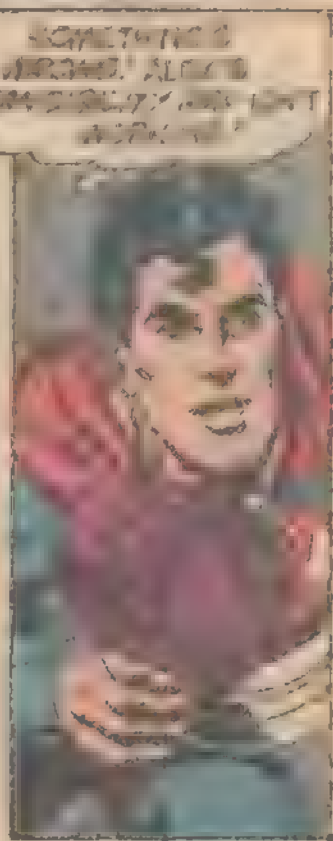
THEY'LL DESTROY EACH
OTHER IF ALEX'S RAY
FAILS.

ALL THOSE
PEOPLE WILL
DIE... ALL OF THEM!
INACCIDENTS,
CAUGHT IN THE
LUTHORS' PLOT
FOR REVENGE!



WHAT IS IT ABOUT THESE
MAD MEN? BLAST, I
WISH I COULD
UNDERSTAND THEM...

...BUT I
CANNOT! ALL I
CAN DO IS KEEP
FIGHTING
THEM--



SOMETHING'S
WRONG! ALEX'S
RAY... IT'S NOT
WORKING!



MY PLAN TO
MAKE BOTH
WORLDS INTAN-
GIBLE-- TO LET
THEM PASS
THROUGH EACH
OTHER UNHARMED--
IS FAILING--

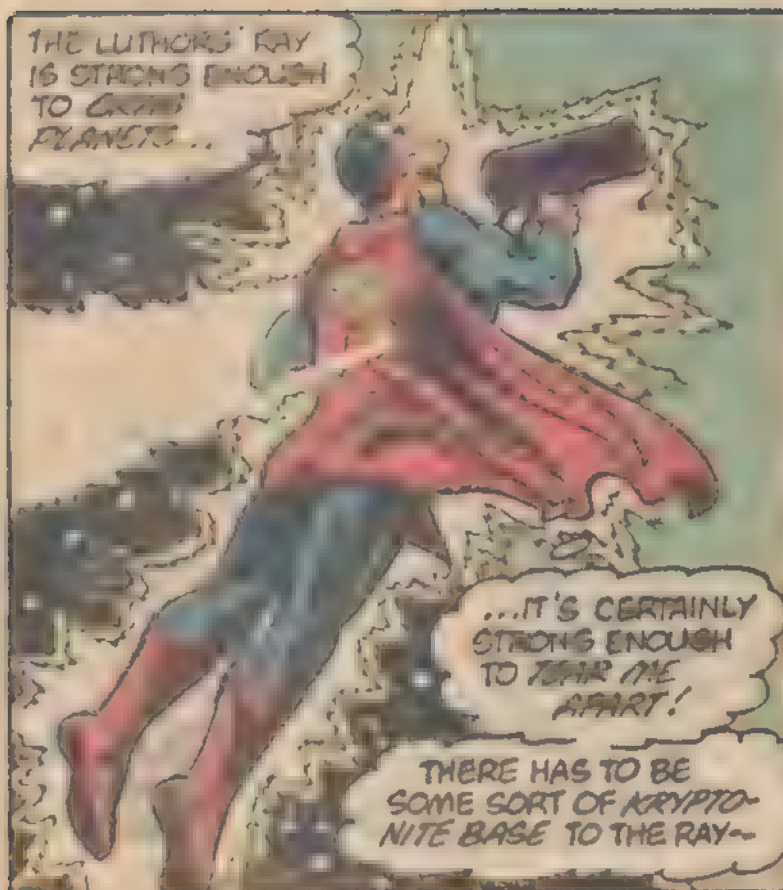
HOLD IT! I DON'T
SEE IT ON THE MAPS
OF THE EARTHS... THE
TWO LUTHORS' ION
TRACTOR BEAM...

ALEX'S RAY
USES ION POWER,
TOO. BUT IT
PROBABLY ISN'T
POWERFUL ENOUGH...



...UNLESS
I CAN
INTERFERE
THEIR BEAM--

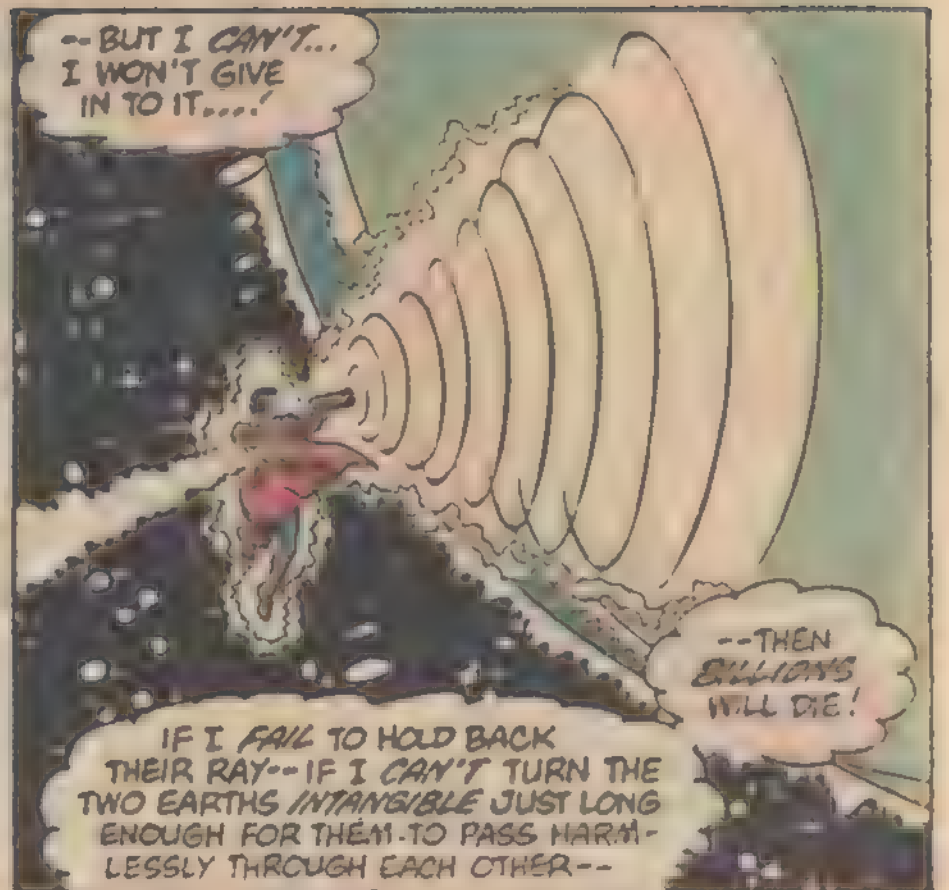
--BY PLACING
MYSELF DIRECTLY
IN ITS PATH!



THE LUTHORS' RAY IS STRONG ENOUGH TO ~~CRACK~~ PLANETS...

...IT'S CERTAINLY STRONG ENOUGH TO TEAR ME APART!

THERE HAS TO BE SOME SORT OF KRYPTO-NITE BASE TO THE RAY--



--BUT I CAN'T... I WON'T GIVE IN TO IT....!

--THEN BILLIONS WILL DIE!

IF I FAIL TO HOLD BACK THEIR RAY-- IF I CAN'T TURN THE TWO EARTHS INTANGIBLE JUST LONG ENOUGH FOR THEM TO PASS HARMLESSLY THROUGH EACH OTHER--

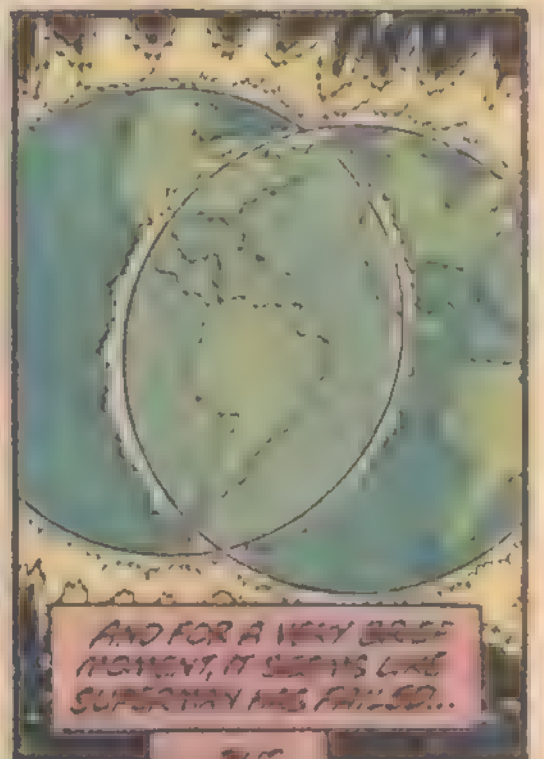


WHATEVER THE RISK TO ME, I'VE GOT TO SUCCEED!

THEY APPROX, THE TWO EARTHS...



...AS SUPERMAN TAKES A WORRIED AND DEEP BREATH.



AND FOR A VERY BRIEF MOMENT, IT SEEMS LIKE SUPERMAN HAS FAILED...

...BUT...



HE SUCCEEDED! THE EARTHS ARE ~~SAVED~~ AND YOUR COMPUTER CONTROL BOARD CAN NOW SHIFT THEM BACK TO THEIR OWN VIBRATORY DIMENSIONS!



ONCE AGAIN YOU'VE BOTH FAILED!

WHY DON'T YOU TWO TAKE THAT AS AN OMEN THAT PEOPLE LIKE YOU WILL NEVER SUCCEED?



FIN

EARTHS BEYOND EARTHS



S-3979

My first introduction to the idea of parallel worlds was through a story in *SUPERBOY* #117 (Dec., 1964)—one of many to use the concept in the various *Superman* titles then edited by Mort Weisinger. As *Superboy* explained it, "Many similar universes co-exist in the same space, but in an infinite number of different dimensions. There's no limit to the variations. Chief Parker may be a criminal in one world, an ape-like being in another...or even a woman!" This particular Earth, however, was so similar to *Superboy's* own that he spent two days there before realizing he'd accidentally crossed a dimensional barrier. Its major differences were that the town of "Smallville" was spelled with a missing "l" and that several members of the *Legion of Super-Heroes* were evil instead of good.

But shortly thereafter, in the pages of *FLASH*, #137 (June 1963—a little over a year old when I first read it) I encountered a far more fascinating parallel world. On this Earth, *The Flash* had a completely different costume and secret identity from the one I knew; he belonged to a *Justice Society of America* rather than the familiar *Justice League* (with differently-costumed versions of *Green Lantern*, *Wonder Woman*, *Hawkman* and other JLA members, as well as completely different heroes like *Dr. Mid-Nite* and *Johnny Thunder*) and battled intriguingly-different villains like the immortal *Vandal Savage*, who would have imprisoned him and his entire *Justice Society* had our own *Flash* not taken a hand. Moreover, an old issue of *ALL-STAR COMICS* in Barry (*Flash*) Allen's collection indicated that this was not just another parallel world created for the purpose of a single story and thereafter to be forgotten, but an Earth with a background and history somewhat older than "our" *Flash's* own. Needless to say, I set out to find out as much more about this "other Earth" as I possibly could.

It turned out that this *Flash* story had been the third to feature this particular alternate Earth, and in *JUSTICE LEAGUE OF AMERICA* #21 (August, 1963) it was officially named "Earth-Two"—"Earth-One" being the world where the present-day *Flash* and *Justice League* lived. (Julie Schwartz, who edited all the early Earth-Two stories and created the concept with writer Gardner Fox, later remarked that the names should properly have been reversed since Earth-One and its heroes came later—but by then it was too late to change.) This story was the first to bring the *Justice Society* back into action alongside its modern counterpart, and the reaction was so enthusiastic that JLA/JSA crossovers have been annual events ever since.

We learned more and more about the *Justice Society* and its members as they continued to pop up in a number of DC titles, and even to be revived on their own—most recently in the new *ALL-STAR SQUADRON*. Even Barry Allen's old comics were explained as having been produced by Earth-One writers mentally "tuned in" on Earth-Two—and, carrying the idea to its logical conclusion, *FLASH* #179 brought Barry (*Flash*) Allen to "Earth-Prime," where he was known only as a comic book character...

Yet one important individual seemed to be missing from Earth-Two as we saw more and more of the *Justice Society's* large membership—the one man common to almost all the other DC parallel worlds introduced in Mort Weisinger's titles: *SUPERMAN*. True, there weren't two distinct versions of *Superman* as there were of *The Flash* and others; his adventures had been published continuously since 1938. But,

although *Superman* had never been a regular member of the *Justice Society*, he had appeared in two stories of the 1940's group and was mentioned in several others. And despite the lack of a definite cancellation and revival, the character had changed much since his first appearance—in powers, costume, and even background.

It made sense, therefore, to assume that there was a *Superman* on Earth-Two—a *Superman* who, as in the early stories, began his career as an adult rather than a boy, worked for George Taylor of the *Daily Star* rather than for Perry White of the *Daily Planet*, and who battled a red-haired, European *Luthor* and a chinless, business-suited *Mr. Mxyzptlk* instead of the young, bald *Lex Luthor* and exotically-costumed *Mxyzptlk* of the more recent stories.

But it was difficult to find an exact dividing line between the two versions of *Superman*, because the changes were so gradual. (Perry White and the *Daily Planet*, for example, had already been established before *Mxyzptlk*, let alone *Mxyzptlk*, ever appeared.) Nevertheless, such discrepancies could be attributed to the conflicting "signals" received by Earth-Prime chroniclers, so it was simplest and most appropriate to assign the original versions of all names, characters and events to the Earth-Two continuity. In some cases, even the discrepancies could be fit onto one Earth or the other—the Earth-Two Perry White, for instance, did work for the *Star* and may well have filled in for George Taylor at times, though he lost out on the permanent position to Clark Kent when Taylor retired. (Similarly, an Earth-One George Taylor is also the editor of the *Daily Star*—although not in Metropolis but in Star City, where Oliver (*Green Arrow*) Queen is one of his columnists. Doubtless this editor is related to the George Taylor who preceded Perry as editor of the *Planet*, as shown in the recent *Superman—the In-Between Years* series.)

As DC acquired the rights to the characters of other publishers, new parallel Earths were established that had their own contingents of super-heroes. Earth-S is the home of the original *Captain Marvel* and other heroes once published by Fawcett, while many of the old Quality Comics heroes, like the *Human Bomb*, live on Earth-X, where the Axis powers won World War II. (Some of the Quality heroes, however, either have counterparts or exist exclusively on other Earths—*Kid Eternity* is on Earth-S, for example, and *Blackhawk* and *Plastic Man* have counterparts on Earth-Two and Earth-One—but were killed long ago on Earth-X. It must have been these dead heroes who were summoned by *Kid Eternity* to aid him back in the '40's. And several Quality heroes belong to the *All-Star Squadron*.) Even Earth-Prime once had a super-hero, *Ultra*—though he has since moved to Earth-One.

However, one Earth had no super-heroes at all—until this issue! On Earth-Three, first introduced in *JLA* #29 (August 1964), every super-being was a villain—and the *Crime Syndicate of America* ran rampant with nobody to stop it until the *Justice League* and *Justice Society* took a hand. They defeated the *Crime Syndicate*, and confined its five members in a prison they constructed between the dimensions. Three of the *Syndicate* villains—including *Ultraman*, Earth-Three's version of *Superman*—were briefly freed by the *SECRET SOCIETY OF SUPER-VILLAINS* in the 14th issue of their magazine (May, 1978). But by the following issue, *Captain Comet* had restored them to their prison, where they have remained ever since—until now!

—Rich Morrissey



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